GENERAL

TRAITS AND STORIES

OF THE

IRISH PEASANTRY

BY

WILLIAM CARLETON

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GENERAL

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OF

THE IRISH PEASANTRY.

FIRST SERIES.

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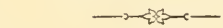

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NED M'KEOWN.

NED M'KEOWN'S house stood exactly in an angle formed by the cross-roads of Kilrudden. It was a long, whitewashed building, well thatched, and furnished with the usual appurtenances of yard and offices. Like most Irish houses of the better sort, it had two doors, one opening into a garden that sloped down from the rear in a southern direction. The barn was a continuation of the dwelling-house, and might be distinguished from it by a darker shade of colour, being only rough-cast. It was situated on a small eminence, but, with respect to the general locality of the country, in a delightful vale, which runs up, for twelve or fourteen miles, between two ranges of dark, well-defined mountains, that give to the interjacent country the form of a low inverted arch. This valley, which altogether, allowing for the occasional breaks and intersections of hill-ranges, extends upwards of thirty miles in length, is the celebrated valley of the "Black Pig," so well known in the politico-traditional history of Ireland, and the legends connected with the famous Beal Dearg. That part of it where Ned M'Keown resided was peculiarly beautiful and romantic. From the eminence on which the house stood, a sweep of the most fertile meadow-land stretched away to the foot of a series of intermingled hills and vales, which bounded this extensive carpet towards the north. Through these meadows ran a smooth river, called the *Mullin-burn*, which wound its way through them with such tortuosity that it was proverbial in the neighbourhood to say, of any man remarkable for dishonesty, "He's as crooked as the Mullin-burn"—an epithet which was sometimes, although unjustly, applied to Ned himself. This deep but narrow river had its origin in the glens and ravines of a mountain which bounded the vale in a south-eastern direction; and after sudden and heavy rains it tumbled down with such violence and impetuosity over the crags and rock-ranges in its way, and accumulated so amazingly, that on reaching the

meadows it inundated their surface, carrying away sheep, cows, and cocks of hay upon its yellow flood. It also boiled and eddied, and roared with a hoarse *sugh*, that was heard at a considerable distance.

On the north-west side ran a ridge of high hills, with the cloud-capped peak of Knockmany rising in lofty eminence above them. These, as they extended towards the south, became gradually deeper in their hue, until at length they assumed the shape and form of heath-clad mountains, dark and towering. The prospect on either range is highly pleasing, and capable of being compared with any I have ever seen in softness, variety, and that serene lustre which reposes only on the surface of a country rich in the beauty of fertility, and improved by the hand of industry and taste. Opposite Knockmany, at a distance of about four miles, on the south-eastern side, rose the huge and dark outline of Cullimore, standing out in gigantic relief against the clear blue of a summer sky, and flinging down his frowning and haughty shadow almost to the firm-set base of his lofty rival; or, in winter, wrapped in a mantle of clouds, and crowned with unsullied snow, reposing in undisturbed tranquillity, whilst the loud voice of storms howled around him.

To the northward, immediately behind Cullimore, lies Althadhawan, a deep, craggy, precipitous glen, running up to its very base, and studded with oak, hazel, rowan-tree, and holly. This picturesque glen extends two or three miles, until it melts into the softness of grove and meadow, in the rich landscape below. Then, again, on the opposite side, is *Lumford's Glen*, with its overhanging rocks, whose yawning depth and silver waterfall, of one hundred and fifty feet, are at once finely and fearfully contrasted with the elevated peak of Knockmany, rising into the clouds above it.

From either side of these mountains may be seen six or eight country towns—the beautiful grouping of hill and plain, lake, river, grove, and dell—the grey reverend cathedral, the whitewashed cottage, and the comfortable farmhouse. To these may be added the wild upland and the cultivated demesne, the green sheep-walk, the dark moor, the splendid mansion, and ruined castle of former days. Delightful remembrance! Many a day, both of sunshine and storm, have I, in the strength and pride of happy youth, bounded, fleet as the mountain roe, over these blue hills! Many an evening, as the yellow beams of the setting sun shot slantingly, like rafters of gold, across the depth of this blessed and peaceful valley, have I followed, in solitude, the impulses of a wild and wayward fancy, and sought the quiet dell, or viewed the setting sun, as he scattered his glorious and shining beams through the glowing foliage of the trees, in the vista where I stood; or wandered along the river, whose banks were fringed with the hanging willow, whilst I listened to the thrush singing among the hazels that crowned the sloping green above me, or watched the plashing otter, as he ventured from the dark angles and intricacies of the upland glen, to seek his prey in the meadow-stream during the favourable dusk of twilight. Many a time have I heard the simple song of Roger

M'Cann, coming from the top of brown Dunroe, mellowed, by the stillness of the hour, to something far sweeter to the heart than all that the laboured pomp of musical art and science can effect; or the song of Katty Roy, the beauty of the village, streaming across the purple-flowered moor,

"Sweet as the shepherd's pipe upon the mountains."

Many a time, too, have I been gratified, in the same poetical hour, by the sweet sound of honest Ned M'Keown's ungreased cart-wheels, clacking, when nature seemed to have fallen asleep after the day-stir and animation of rural business—for Ned was sometimes a carman—on his return from Dublin with a load of his own groceries, without as much money in his pocket as would purchase oil, wherewith to silence the sounds which the friction produced—regaling his own ears the while, as well as the music of the cart would permit his melody to be heard, with his favourite tune of *Cannie Soogah.*

Honest, blustering, good-humoured Ned was the indefatigable merchant of the village; ever engaged in some ten or twenty pound speculation, the capital of which he was sure to extort, perhaps for the twelfth time, from the savings of Nancy's frugality, by the equivocal test of a month or six weeks' consecutive sobriety, and which said speculation he never failed to wind up by the total loss of the capital for Nancy, and the capital loss of a broken head for himself. Ned had eternally some bargain on his hands: at one time you might see him a yarn-merchant, planted in the next market-town, upon the upper step of Mr. Birnie's hall-door, where the yarn-market was held, surrounded by a crowd of eager countrywomen, anxious to give Ned the preference—first, because he was a well-wisher; secondly, because he hadn't his heart in the penny; and thirdly, because he gave sixpence a spangle more than any other man in the market.

There might Ned be found, with his twenty pounds of hard silver jingling in the bottom of a green bag as a decoy to his customers, laughing loud as he piled the yarn in an ostentatious heap, which, in the pride of his commercial sagacity, he had purchased at a dead loss. Again, you might see him at a horse-fair, cantering about on the back of some sleek but broken-winded jade, with spavined legs, imposed on him as "a great bargain entirely," by the superior cunning of some rustic sharper; or standing over a hogshead of damaged flaxseed, in the purchase of which he shrewdly suspected himself of having overreached the seller, by allowing him for it a greater price than the prime seed of the market would have cost him. In short, Ned was never out of a speculation, and whatever he undertook was sure to prove a complete failure. But he had one mode of consolation, which consisted in sitting down with the fag-ends of Nancy's capital in his pocket, and drinking night and day with this neighbour and that, whilst a shilling remained; and when he found himself at the end of his tether, he was sure to fasten a quarrel on some friend or acquaintance, and to get his head broken for his pains.

None of all this blustering, however, happened within the range of

Nancy's jurisdiction. Ned, indeed, might drink and sing, and swagger and fight—and he contrived to do so; but notwithstanding all his apparent courage, there was *one* eye which made him quail, and before which he never put on the hector;—there was *one*, in whose presence the loudness of his song would fall away into a very awkward and unmusical quaver, and under whose glance his laughing face often changed to the visage of a man who is disposed to anything but mirth.

The fact was this:—Whenever Ned found that his speculation was *gone a shaughran*,[1] as he termed it, he fixed himself in some favourite public-house, from whence he seldom stirred while his money lasted, except when dislodged by Nancy, who usually, upon learning where he had taken cover, paid him an unceremonious visit, to which Ned's indefensible delinquency gave the colour of legitimate authority. Upon these occasions, Nancy, accompanied by two sturdy servant-men, would sally forth to the next market-town, for the purpose of bringing home "graceless Ned," as she called him. And then you might see Ned between the two servants, a few paces in advance of Nancy, having very much the appearance of a man performing a pilgrimage to the gallows, or of a deserter guarded back to his barracks, in order to become a target for the muskets of his comrades. Ned's compulsory return always became a matter of some notoriety; for Nancy's excursion in quest of the "graceless" was not made without frequent denunciations of wrath against him, and many melancholy apologies to the neighbours for entering upon the task of personally securing him. By this means her enterprise was sure to get wind, and a mob of all the idle young men and barefooted urchins of the village, with Bob M'Cann, "*a three-quarter clift*,"[2] or mischievous fellow, half knave, half fool, was to be found a little below the village, upon an elevation of the road that commanded a level stretch of half a mile or so, in anxious expectation of the procession. No sooner had this arrived at the point of observation, than the little squadron would fall rereward of the principal group, for the purpose of extracting from Nancy a full and particular account of the capture.

"Indeed, childher, it's no wonder for yees to inquire! Where did I get him, Dick?—musha, and where would I get him but in the ould place, ahagur; with the ould set: don't yees know that a dacent place or dacent company wouldn't sarve Ned?—nobody but Shane Martin, and Jimmy Tague, and the other blackguards."

"And what will you do with him, Nancy?"

"Och! thin, Dick, avourneen, it's myself that's jist tired thinking of that; at any rate, consuming to the loose foot he'll get this blessed month to come, Dick, agra!"

"'Throth, Nancy," another mischievous monkey would exclaim, "if you hadn't great patience entirely you couldn't put up with such thratment, at all at all."

[1] Gone astray.

[2] This is equal to the proverb—"He wants a square," that is, though knavish, not thoroughly rational.

"Why thin, God knows, it's true for you, Barney. D'ye hear that, 'graceless'? the very childher making a laughing-stock and a may game of you!—but wait till we get under the roof, any how."

"Ned," a third would say, "isn't it a burning shame for you to break the poor crathur's heart, this a-way? Throth, but you ought to hould down your head, sure enough—a dacent woman! that only for her you would'nt have a house over you, so you wouldn't."

"And throth, and the same house is going, Tim," Nancy would exclaim, "and when it goes, let him see thin who'll do for him: let him try if his blackguards will stand to him, whin he won't have poor foolish Nancy at his back."

During these conversations, Ned would talk on between his two guards, with a dogged-looking and condemned face, Nancy behind him, with his own cudgel, ready to administer an occasional bang whenever he attempted to slacken his pace, or throw over his shoulder a growl of dissent or justification.

On getting near home, the neighbours would occasionally pop out their heads, with a smile of good-humoured satire on their faces, which Nancy was very capable of translating.

"Ay," she would say, addressing them, "I've caught him—here he is to the fore. Indeed, you may well laugh, Katty Rafferty; not a one of myself blames you for it.—Ah, ye mane crathur," aside to Ned, "if you had the blood of a hen in you, you wouldn't have the neighbours braking their hearts laughing at you in sich a way; and above all the people in the world, them Raffertys, that got the decree against us at the last sessions, although I offered to pay within fifteen shillings of the differ—the grubs!"

Having seen her hopeful charge safely deposited on the hob, Nancy would throw her cloak into this corner, and her bonnet into that, with the air of a woman absorbed by the consideration of some vexatious trial; she would then sit down, and, lighting her *doodeen*,[1] exclaim:

"Wurrah, wurrah! but it's me that's the heart-scalded crathur with that man's four quarters! The Lord may help me, and grant me patience with him, any way!—to have my little, honest, hard-earned, penny spint among a pack of vagabonds, that don't care if him and me wor both down the river, so they could get their skinful of drink out of him. No matther, agra! things can't long be this a-way;—but what does Ned care?—give *him* drink and fighting, and his blackguards about him, and that's his glory. There now's the landlord coming down upon us for the rint, and unless he takes the cows out of the byre, or the bed from anundher us, what in the wide earth is there for him?"

The current of this lecture was never interrupted by a single observation from Ned, who usually employed himself in silently playing with "Bunty," a little black cur without a tail, and a great favourite with Nancy; or, if he noticed anything out of its place in

[1] A short pipe.

the house, he would arrange it with great apparent care. In the meantime Nancy's wrath generally evaporated with the smoke of the pipe—a circumstance which Ned well knew;—for after she had sucked it until it emitted a shrill bubbling sound, like that from a reed, her brows, which wore at other times an habitual frown, would gradually relax into a more benevolent expression—the parenthetical curves on each side of her mouth, formed by the irascible pursing of her lips, would become less marked—the dog or cat, or whatever else came in her way, instead of being kicked aside, or pursued in an underfit of digressional peevishness, would be put out of her path with gentler force—so that it was, in such circumstances, a matter of little difficulty to perceive that conciliation would soon be the order of the day. Ned's conduct on these critical occasions was very prudent and commendable; he still gave Nancy her own way, never "jawed back to her," but took shelter, as it were, under his own patience, until the storm had passed, and the sun of her good-humour began to shine again. Nancy herself, now softened by the fumes of her own pigtail, usually made the first overtures to a compromise, but without departing from the practice and principles of higher negotiators—always in an indirect manner; as, "Judy, avourneen," speaking to the servant, "maybe that crathur," pointing to Ned, "ate nothing to-day; you had better, agra, get him the could bacon that's in the cupboard, and warm for him, upon the *greeshaugh*,[1] them *yallow-legs*,[2] that's in the colindher, though God he knows it's ill my common[3]—but no matter, ahagur, there's enough said, I'm thinking—give them to him."

On Ned seating himself to his bacon and potatoes, Nancy would light another pipe, and plant herself on the opposite hob, putting some interrogatory to him in the way of business—always concerning a third person, and still in a tone of dry ironical indifference—as,

"Did you see Jimmy Conolly on your travels?"

"No."

"Humph! Can you tell us if Andy Morrow sould his coult?"

"He did."

"Maybe, you have *gumption* enough to know what he got for him?"

"Fifteen guineas."

"In throth, and it's more nor a poor body would get; but, any way, Andy Morrow desarves to get a good price; he's a man that takes care of his own business, and minds nothing else. I wish that filly of ours was dockt; you ought to spake to Jim M'Quade about her: it's time to make her up—you know we'll want to sell her for the rint."

This was an assertion, by the way, which Ned knew to have everything but truth in it.

"Never heed the filly," Ned would reply, "I'll get Charley Lawdher to dock her—but it's not her I'm thinking of: did you hear the news about the tobacky?"

[1] Hot embers. [2] A kind of potato. [3] It's ill becoming—or it ill becomes me.

"No, but I hope we won't be long so."

"Well, any how, we wor in luck to buy in them three last rowls."

"Eh? in luck! death alive, how, Ned?"

"Sure there was three ships of it lost last week, on their way from the kingdom of Swuzzerland in the Aist Indians, where it grows: we can raise it thruppence a pound now."

"No, Ned! you're not in arnest?"

"Nancy, you may say I am; and as soon as Tom Loan comes home from Dublin, he'll tell us all about it; and for that matther, maybe, may rise sixpence a pound: any how, we'll gain a lob by it, I'm it thinking."

"May I never stir! but that's luck; well, Ned, you may thank me for that, any way, or not a rowl we'd have in the four corners of the house—and you wanted to persuade me against buying thim; but I knew betther—for the tobacky's always sure to get a bit of a hitch at this time o' the year."

"Bedad, you can do it, Nancy, I'll say that for you—that's and give you your own way."

"Eh! can't I, Ned?—and what was betther, I bate down Pether M'Entee three-ha'pence a pound afther I bought them."

"Ha! ha! ha! by my sannies, Nancy, as to market-making, they may all throw their caps at you, you thief o' the world; you can do them nately."

"Ha! ha! ha! Stop, Ned, don't drink that water—it's not from the rock well; I'll jist mix a sup of this last stuff we got from the mountains, till you taste it. I think it's not worse nor the last—for Hugh Traynor's an ould hand at making it."

This was all Ned wanted; his point was now carried: but with respect to the rising of the tobacco, the less that is said about that the better for his veracity.

Having thus given the reader a slight sketch of Ned and Nancy, and of the beautiful valley in which this worthy speculator had his residence, I shall next proceed to introduce him to the village circle, which, during the long winter nights, might be found in front of Ned's kitchen fire of blazing turf, whose light was given back in ruddy reflection from the bright pewter plates that were ranged upon the white and well-scoured dresser in just and gradual order, from the small egg-plate to the large and capacious dish, whereon, at Christmas and Easter, the substantial round of corned beef used to rear itself so proudly over the more ignoble joints at the lower end of the table.

Seated in this clear-obscure of domestic light, which, after all, gives the heart a finer and more touching notion of enjoyment than the glitter of the theatre or the blaze of the saloon, might be found—first, Andy Morrow, the juryman of the quarter-sessions, sage and important in the consciousness of legal knowledge, and somewhat dictatorial withal in its application to such knotty points as arose out of the subjects of their nocturnal debates. Secondly, Bob Gott, who filled the foreign and military departments, and related the wonderful history

of the ghost which appeared to him on the night after the battle of Bunker's Hill. To him succeeded Tom M'Roarkin, the little asthmatic anecdotarian of half the country, remarkable for chuckling at his own stories. Then came old Bill M'Kinny, poacher and horse-jockey; little, squeaking, thin-faced Alick M'Kinley, a facetious farmer of substance; and Shane Fadh, who handed down traditions and fairy-tales. Enthroned on one hob sat Pat Frayne, the schoolmaster, with the short arm, who read and explained the newspaper for "Ould Square Colwell," and was looked upon as premier to the aforesaid cabinet. Ned himself filled the opposite seat of honour.

One night, a little before the Christmas holidays, in the year 18—, the personages just described were seated around Ned's fire, some with their chirping pints of ale or porter, and others with their quantum of *Hugh Traynor*, or mountain dew, and all with good-humour and a strong tendency to happiness visible in their faces. The night was dark, close, and misty—so dark, indeed, that, as Nancy said, "you could hardly see your finger before you." Ned himself was full of fun, with a pint of porter beside him, and a pipe in his mouth, just in his glory for the night. Opposite to him was Pat Frayne, with an old newspaper on his knee, which he had just perused for the edification of his audience; beside him was Nancy, busily employed in knitting a pair of sheep's-grey stockings for Ned; the remaining personages formed a semicircular ring about the hearth. Behind, on the kitchen-table, sat Paddy Smith, the servant man, with three or four of the *gorsoons* of the village about him, engaged in a little under-plot of their own. On the other side, and a little removed from the light, sat, Ned's two nieces, Biddy and Bessy Connolly, the former with Atty Johnston's mouth within whisper-reach of her ear, and the latter seated close to her professed admirer, Billy Fulton, her uncle's shopman. This group was completely abstracted from the entertainment which was going forward in the circle round the fire.

"I wondher," said Andy Morrow, "what makes Joe M'Crea throw down that fine ould castle of his, in Aughentain?"

"I'm tould," said M'Roarkin, "that he expects money; for they say there's a lot of it buried somewhere about the same building."

"Jist as much as there's in my wig," replied Shane Fadh, "and there's ne'er a pocket to it yet. Why, bless your sowl, how could there be money in it, whin the last man of the Grameses that ow'd it—I mane of the ould stock, afore it went into Lord Mountjoy's hands—sould it out, ran through the money, and died begging afther. Did none of you ever hear of

'Ould John Grame,
'That *swally'd* the castle of Aughentain!'"

"That was long afore my time," said the poacher: "but I know that the rabbit-burrow between that and Jack Appleton's garden will soon be run out."

"*Your* time!" responded Shane Fadh, with contempt; "ay, and your father's afore you: *yir* father doesn t remimber more nor seeing

his funeral, and a merry one it was ; for my grandfather, and some of them that had a respect for the family and his forbarers, if they hadn't it for himself, made up as much money among them as berried him dacently, any how—ay, and gave him a rousin' wake into the bargain, with lashins of whiskey, stout beer, and ale ; for in them times—God be with them — every farmer brewed his own ale and beer ; more betoken, that one pint of it was worth a keg of this wash of yours, Ned."

"Wasn't it he that used to *appear ?"* inquired M'Roarkin.

"Sure enough he did, Tom."

"Lord save us," said Nancy, "what could trouble him, I dunna ?"

"Why," continued Shane Fadh, "some said one thing, and some another ; but the upshot of it was this : when the last of the Grameses sould the estate, castle and all, it seems he didn't resave all the purchase money ; so, afther he had spint what he got, he applied to the purchaser for the remainder — him that the Mountjoy family bought it from ; but it seems he didn't draw up writings, or sell it according to law, so that the thief o' the world baffled him from day to day, and wouldn't give him a penny—bekase he knew, the blaggard, that the Square was then as poor as a church mouse, and hadn't money enough to thry it at law with him ; but the Square was always a simple, asy-going man. One day he went to this fellow, riding on an ould garran, with a shoe loose—the only baste he had in the world—and axed him, for God's sake, to give him some of what he owed him, if it was ever so little : 'for,' says he, 'I have not as much money betune me and death as will get a set of shoes for my horse.'

"'Well,' says the nager, 'if you're not able to keep your horse shod, I would jist recommend you to sell him, and thin his shoes won't cost you anything,' says he.

"The old Square went away with tears in his eyes, for he loved the poor brute, bekase they wor the two last branches of the ould stock."

"Why," inquired M'Kinley, in his small squeaking voice, "was the horse related to the family ?"

"I didn't say he was related to the fam——Get out, you *shingaun!"*[1] returned the old man, perceiving by the laugh that now went round the sly tendency of the question. "No, not to *your* family either, for he had nothing of the ass in him—eh ? will ye put that in your pocket, my little *skinadhre*[2]—ha ! ha ! ha !"

The laugh was now turned against M'Kinley.

Shane Fadh proceeded : "The ould Square, as I was tellin' yees, cried to find himself an' the poor baste so dissolute, but when he had gone a bit from the fellow, he comes back to the vagabone. 'Now,' says he, 'mind my words—if you happen to live afther me, you need never expect a night's pace ; for I here make a serous an' solemn vow, that as long as my property's in your possession, or in any of your seed, breed, or ginerations, I'll never give over hauntin' you an' them,

[1] Fairy-like, or connected with the fairies. [2] A thin, fleshless, stunted person.

till you'll rue to the back-bone your dishonesty an' chathery to me an' this poor baste, that hasn't a shoe to its foot.'

"'Well,' says the nager, 'I ll take chance of that, any way.'"

"I'm tould, Shane," observed the poacher, "that the Square was a fine man in his time, that wouldn't put up with such thratement from anybody."

"Ay, but he was ould now," Shane replied, "and too wakely to fight. A fine man, Bill!—he was the finest man, 'ceptin' ould Square Storey, that ever was in this counthry. I hard my grandfather often say that he was six feet four, and made in proportion—a handsome, black-a-vis'd[1] man, with great dark whiskers. Well! he spint money like sklates, and so he died miserable—but had a merry birrel, as I said."

"But," inquired Nancy, "did he ever *appear* to the rogue that chated him?"

"Every night in the year, Nancy, exceptin' Sundays; and what was more, the horse along with him—for he used to come ridin' at midnight upon the same garran; and it was no matther what place or company the other 'ud be in, the ould Square would come regularly, and crave him for what he owed him."

"So it appears that horses have sowls," observed M'Roarkin, philosophically, giving, at the same time, a cynical chuckle at the sarcasm of his own conceit.

"Whether they have sowls or bodies," replied the narrator, "what I'm tellin' you is the thruth; every night in the year the ould chap would come for what was indue him; and as the two went along, the noise of the loose shoe upon the horse would be hard rattlin', and seen knockin' the fire out of the stones, by the neighbours and the thief that chated him, even before the Square would appear, at all at all."

'Oh, wurrah!' exclaimed Nancy, shuddering with terror, "I wouldn't take anything, and be out now on the Drumfurrar road, and nobody with me but myself."

"I think if you wor," said M'Kinley, 'the light weights and short measures would be coming acrass your conscience."

"No, in throth, Alick, wouldn't they; but maybe if *you* wor, the promise you broke to Sally Mitchell might trouble you a bit: at any rate, I've a prayer, and if I only repated it *wanst*, I mightn't be afeard of all the divils in hell."

"Throth, but it's worth havin', Nancy: where did you get it?" asked M'Kinley.

"Hould your wicked tongue, you thief of a heretic," said Nancy, laughing, "when will *you* larn anything that's good? I got it from one that wouldn't have it if it *wasn't* good—Darby M'Murt, the pilgrim, since you must know."

"Whisht!" said Frayne: "upon my word, I blieve the ould Square's comin' to pay us a visit; does any of yees hear a horse trottin' with a shoe loose?"

[1] Black-visaged.

"I sartinly hear it," observed Andy Morrow.

"And I," said Ned himself.

The was now a general pause, and in the silence a horse, proceeding from the moors in the direction of the house, was distinctly heard: and nothing could be less problematical than that one of his shoes was loose.

"Boys, take care of yourselves," said Shane Fadh; "if the Square comes, he won't be a pleasant customer—he was a terrible fellow in his day: I'll hould goold to silver that he'll have the smell of brimstone about him."

"Nancy, where's your prayer *now?*" said M'Kinley, with a grin. "I think you had betther out with it, and thry if it keeps this ould brimstone Square on the wrong side of the house."

"Behave yourself, Alick; it's a shame for you to be sich a hardened crathur: upon my sannies, I blieve you're afeard of neither God nor the divil—the Lord purtect and guard us from the dirty baste!"

"You mane particklarly them that uses short measures and light weights," rejoined M'Kinley.

There was another pause, for the horseman was within a few perches of the cross-roads. At this moment an unusual gust of wind, accompanied by torrents of rain, burst against the house with a violence that made its ribs creak; and the stranger's horse, the shoe still clanking, was distinctly heard to turn in from the road to Ned's door, where it stopped, and the next moment a loud knocking intimated the horseman's intention to enter. The company now looked at each other, as if uncertain what to do. Nancy herself grew pale, and, in the agitation of the moment, forgot to think of her protecting prayer. Biddy and Bessy Connolly started from the *settle* on which they had been sitting with their sweethearts, and sprung beside their uncle on the hob. The stranger was still knocking with great violence, yet there was no disposition among the company to admit him, notwithstanding the severity of the night—blowing, as it really did, a perfect hurricane. At length a sheet of lightning flashed through the house, followed by an amazing loud clap of thunder; while, with a sudden push from without, the door gave way, and in stalked a personage whose stature was at least six feet four, with dark eyes and complexion, and coal-black whiskers of an enormous size, the very image of the Squire they had been describing. He was dressed in a long black surtout, which made him appear even taller than he actually was, had a pair of heavy boots upon him, and carried a tremendous whip, large enough to fell an ox. He was in a rage on entering; and the heavy, dark, close-knit brows, from beneath which a pair of eyes, equally black, shot actual fire, and the Turk-like whiskers, which curled themselves up, as it were, in sympathy with his fury, joined to his towering height, gave him altogether, when we consider the frame of mind in which he found the company, an appalling and almost supernatural appearance.

"Confound you, for a knot of lazy scoundrels," exclaimed the stranger. "Why do you sit here so calmly, while any being craves

admittance on such a night as this? Here, you lubber in the corner, with the pipe in your mouth, come and put up this horse of mine until the night settles."

"May the blessed Mother purtect us!" exclaimed Nancy, in a whisper to Andy Morrow, "if I blieve he's a right thing!—would it be the ould Square? Did you ever set your eyes upon sich a——"

"Will you bestir yourself, you boor, and not keep my horse and saddle out under such a torrent?" he cried, "otherwise I must only bring him into the house, and then you may say for once that you've had the devil under your roof."

"Paddy Smith, you lazy spalpeen," said Nancy, winking at Ned to have nothing to do with the horse, "why don't you fly and put up the gintleman's horse? And you, Atty, avourneen, jist go out with him, and hould the candle while he's doin' it: be quick now, and I'll give you glasses apiece when you come in."

"Let them put him up quickly; but I say, you Caliban," added the stranger, addressing Smith, "don't be rash about him, except you can bear fire and brimstone; get him, at all events, a good feed of oats. Poor Satan!" he continued, patting the horse's head, which was now within the door, "you have had a hard night of it, my poor Satan, as well as myself, That's my dark spirit—my brave chuck, that fears neither man nor devil."

This language was by no means calculated to allay the suspicions of those who were present, particularly of Nancy and her two nieces. Ned sat in astonishment, with the pipe in his hand, which he had, in the surprise of the moment, taken from his mouth, his eyes fixed upon the stranger, and his mouth open. The latter noticed him, and, stretching over the heads of the circle, tapped him on the shoulder with his whip.

"I have a few words to say to you, sir," he said.

"To me, your honour!" exclaimed Ned, without stirring, however.

"Yes," replied the other, "but you seem to be fastened to your seat: come this way."

"By all manner of manes, sir," said Ned, starting up, and going over to the dresser, against which the stranger stood.

When the latter had got him there, he very coolly walked up, and secured Ned's comfortable seat on the hob, at the same time observing:

"You hadn't the manners to ask me to sit down; but I always make it a point of conscience to take care of myself, landlord."

There was not a man about the fire who did not stand up, as if struck with a sudden recollection, and offer him a seat.

"No," said he, "thank you, my good fellows, I am very well as it is: I suppose, mistress, you are the landlady," addressing Nancy; "if you be, I'll thank you to bring me a gill of your best whisky—your *best*, mind. Let it be as strong as an evil spirit let loose, and as hot as fire; for it can't be a jot too ardent such a night as this, for a being that rides the devil."

Nancy started up instinctively, exclaiming, "Indeed, plase your

honour's reverence, I am the landlady, as you say, Sir, sure enough; but, the Lawk save and guard us! won't a gallon of raw whiskey be too much for one man to drink?"

"A gallon! I only said a gill, my good hostess; bring me a gill;—but I forget—I believe you have no such measure in this country; bring me a pint, then."

Nancy now went into the bar, whither she gave Ned a wink to follow her; and truly was glad of an opportunity of escaping from the presence of the visitor. When there, she ejaculated,

"May the holy Mother keep and guard us, Ned, but I'm afeard that's no Christian crathur, at all at all! Arrah, Ned, aroon, would he be that ould Square Grame, that Shane Fadh maybe, angered, by spakin' of him?"

"Troth," said Ned, "myself doesn't know what he is; he bates any mortal *I* ever seen."

"Well, hould, agra! I have it: we'll see whether he'll drink this or not, any how."

"Why, what's that you're doin'?" asked Ned.

"Jist," replied Nancy, "mixin' the smallest taste in the world of holy wather with the whisky, and if he drinks *that*, you know he can be nothing that's bad."

Nancy, however, did not perceive that the trepidation of her hand was such as to incapacitate her from making nice distinctions in the admixture. She now brought the spirits to the stranger, who no sooner took a mouthful of it than he immediately stopped it on its passage, and, fixing his eyes earnestly on Nancy, squirted it into the fire, and the next moment the whisky was in a blaze that seemed likely to set the chimney in flames.

"Why, my *honest* hostess," he exclaimed, "do you give this to me for whisky? Confound me, but two-thirds of it is water; and I have no notion to pay for water when I want spirits: have the goodness to exchange this, and get me some better stuff, if you have it."

He again put the jug to his mouth, and having taken a little, swallowed it: "Why, I tell you, woman, you must have made some mistake; one-half of it is water."

Now, Nancy, from the moment he refused to swallow the liquor, had been lock-jawed; the fact was, she thought that the devil himself, or old Squire Graham, had got under her roof; and she stood behind Ned, who was nearly as terrified as herself, with her hands raised, her tongue clinging to the roof of her mouth, and the perspiration falling from her pale face in large drops. But as soon as she saw him swallow a portion of that liquid, which she deemed beyond the deglutition of ghost or devil, she instantly revived—her tongue resumed its accustomed office—her courage, as well as her good-humour, returned, and she went up to him with great confidence, saying:

"Why, then, your reverence's honour, maybe I did make a bit of a mistake, sir," taking up the jug, and tasting its contents. "Hut! bad scran to me, but I did, beggin' your honour's pardon; how-an-diver, I'll soon rightify that, your reverence."

So saying, she went and brought him a pint of the stoutest the house afforded. The stranger drank a glass of it, and then ordered hot water and sugar, adding :

"My honest friends here about the fire will have no objection to help me with this ; but, on second consideration, you had better get us another quart, that, as the night is cold, we may have a jorum at this pleasant fire that will do our hearts good ; and this pretty girl here," addressing Biddy, who really deserved the epithet, "will sit beside me, and give us a song."

It was surprising what an effect the punch, even in perspective, had upon the visual organs of the company ; second sight was rather its precursor than its attendant ; for, with intuitive penetration, they now discovered various good qualities in his ghostship that had hitherto been beyond their ken ; and those very personal properties which before struck them dumb with terror already called forth their applause.

"What a fine man he is!" one would whisper, loud enough, however, to be heard by the object of his panegyric.

"He is, indeed, and a rale gintleman," another would respond, in the same key.

"Hut ! he's none of your proud, stingy, upsthart *bodaghs*[1]—none of your beggarly half-sirs," a third would remark ; "he's the dacent thing entirely—you see he hasn't his heart in a thrifle."

"And so sign's on him," a fourth would add ; "he wasn't bred to shabbiness, as you may know by his fine behaviour and his big whiskers."

When the punch was made, and the kitchen-table placed endwise towards the fire, the stranger, finding himself very comfortable, inquired if he could be accommodated with a bed and supper, to which Nancy replied in the affirmative.

"Then, in that case," said he, "I will be your guest for the night."

Shane Fadh now took courage to repeat the story of old Squire Graham and his horse with the loose shoe, informing the stranger, at the same time, of the singular likeness which he bore to the subject of the story, both in face and size, and dwelling upon the remarkable coincidence in the time and manner of his approach.

"Tut, man !" said the stranger, "a far more extraordinary adventure happened to one of my father's tenants, which, if none of you have any objection, I will relate."

There was a buzz of approbation at this ; and they all thanked his honour, expressing the strongest desire to hear his story. He was just proceeding to gratify them, when another rap came to the door, and, before any of the inmates had time to open it, Father Neddy Delcery and his curate made their appearance, having been on their way home from a conference held in the town of M——, eighteen miles from the scene of our present story.

[1] A person vulgar but rich, without any pretensions but those of wealth to the character of a gentleman ; a churl.

It may be right here to inform the reader that about two hundred yards from Ned's house stood a place of Roman Catholic worship, called "The Forth," from the resemblance it bore to the *Forts* or *Raths* so common in Ireland. It was a small green, perfectly circular, and about twenty yards in diameter. Around it grew a row of old overspreading hawthorns, whose branches formed a canopy that almost shaded it from sun and storm. Its area was encompassed by tiers of seats, one raised above another, and covered with the flowery grass. On these the congregation used to sit—the young men probably swearing-in a Ribbonman, or ogling their sweethearts on the opposite side; the old ones in little groups, discussing the politics of the day as retailed by Mick M'Caffry, the politician; while up near the altar, hemmed in by a ring of old men and women, you might perceive a *voteen*, repeating some new prayer or choice piece of devotion—or some other, in a similar circle, perusing, in a loud voice, Doctor Gallagher's Irish Sermons, Pastorini's History of the Christian Church, or Columbkill's Prophecy—and, perhaps, a strolling pilgrim, the centre of a third collection, singing the *Dies iræ* in Latin, or the Hermit of Killarney in English.

At the extremity of this little circle was a plain altar of wood, covered with a little thatched shed, under which the priest celebrated mass; but before the performance of this ceremony, a large multitude usually assembled opposite Ned's shop-door, at the cross-roads. This crowd consisted of such as wanted to buy tobacco, candles, soap, potash, and such other groceries as the peasantry remote from market towns require. After mass, the public-house was filled to the door-posts with those who wished to get a sample of Nancy's *Iska-behagh*;[1] and many a time has little Father Neddy himself, of a frosty day, after having performed mass with a celerity highly agreeable to his auditory, come in to Nancy, nearly frost-bitten, to get a toothful of mountain dew, to drive the cold out of his stomach.

The fact is, that Father Neddy Delcery made himself quite at home at Ned's, without any reference to Nancy's saving habits; the consequence was that her welcome to him was extremely sincere—"from the teeth out." Father Ned saw perfectly through her assumed heartiness of manner, but acted as if the contrary was the case. Nancy understood him also, and, with an intention of making up by complaisance for her niggardliness in other respects, was a perfect honeycomb. This state of cross purposes, however, could not last long—neither did it. Father Ned never paid, and Nancy never gave credit; so, at length, they came to an open rupture: she threatened to process him for what he owed her, and he, in return, threatened to remove the congregation from "The Forth" to Ballymagowan-bridge, where he intended to set up his nephew, Bill Buckley, in the "public line," to the ruin of Nancy's flourishing establishment.

"Father Ned," said Nancy, "I'm a hard-working, honest woman,

[1] *Usquebagh*—literally, "water of life."

and I don't see why my substance is to be wasted by your reverence, when you won't pay for it."

"And do *you* forget," Father Ned would reply, "that it's me that brings you your custom? Don't you know that if I remove my flock to Ballymagowan, you'll soon sing to another tune? so lay that to your heart."

"Troth, I know that whatever I get I'm obliged to pay for it; and I think every man should do the same, Father Ned. *You* must get a hank of yarn from me, and a bushel or two of oats from Ned, and your riglar dues along with all; but, avourneen, it's yourself that wouldn't raise your hand over us if we wor in the last gasp, for all that, without getting the silver."

"Salvation to me, but you'd skin a flint!"

"Well, if I would, I pay my debts first."

"You do?"

"Yes, troth, do I."

"Why, then, that's more than you'll be able to do long, plase the fates."

"If all my customers wor like your reverence, it is."

"I'll tell you what it is, Nancy, I often threatened to take the congregation from 'The Forth,' and I'll do it—if I don't, may I never sup sorrow!"

Big with such a threat, Father Neddy retired. The apprehensions of Nancy on this point, however, were more serious than she was willing to acknowledge. This dispute took place a few days before the night in question.

Father Neddy was a little man, with a red face, slender legs, and flat feet; he was usually cased in a pair of ribbed minister's grey small-clothes, with leggings of the same material. His coat, which was much too short, rather resembled a jerkin, and gave him altogether an appearance very much at variance with an idea of personal gravity or reverence. Over this dress he wore, in winter, a dark great-coat, with high collar, that buttoned across his face, showing only the point of his red nose; so that, when riding or walking, his hat rested more upon the collar of his coat than upon his head.

The curate was a tall, raw-boned young man, with high jutting cheek-bones, low forehead, and close knees: to his shoulders, which were very high, hung a pair of long bony arms, whose motions seemed rather the effect of machinery than volition. His hair, which was a bad black, was cropped close, and trimmed across his eyebrows; the small-clothes he wore were of the same web which had produced Father Neddy's, and his body-coat was a dark blue, with black buttons. Each wore a pair of grey woollen mittens.

"There, Pether," said Father Ned, as he entered, "hook my bridle along with your own, as your hand is in.—God save all here! Paddy Smith, ma bouchal, put these horses in the stable, till we dry ourselves a bit—Father Pether and I."

"Musha, but you're both welcome," said Nancy, wishing to wipe out the effects of the last tift with Father Neddy, by the assistance of

the stranger's punch: "will ye bounce, ye spalpeens, and let them to the fire. Father Neddy, you're dhreepin' with the rain; and, Father Pether, avourneen, you're wet to the skin, too."

"Troth, and he is, Nancy, and a little bit farther, if you knew but all—four tumblers, Ned—deuce a *spudh*[1] less. Mr. Morrow, how do you do, sir?—And—eh?—Who's this we've got in the corner? A gintleman, boys, if cloth can make one! Mr. Morrow, introduce me."

"Indeed, Father Ned, I haven't the pleasure of knowin' the gintleman myself.'

"Well, no matter—come up, Pether. Sir, I have the honour of introducing you to my curate and coadjuthor, the Reverend Pether M'Clatchaghan, and to myself, his excellent friend, but spiritual superior, the Reverend Ned—hem!—the Reverend *Edward* Deleery, Roman Catholic rector of this highly respectable and extensive parish; and I have further the pleasure," he continued, taking up Andy Morrow's punch, "of drinking your very good health, sir."

"And I have the honour," returned the stranger, rising up, and driving his head among the flitches of bacon that hung in the chimney, "of introducing you and the Rev. M'—M'—M'——"

"—Clatchaghan, sir," subjoined Father Ned.

"Peter M'Illclatchaghan, to Mr. Longinus Polysyllabus Alexandrinus."

"My word, sir, but it's a good and appropriate name, sure enough," said Father Ned, surveying his enormous length: "success to me, but you're an Alexandrine from head to foot—*non solum Longinus, sed Alexandrinus.*"

"You're wrong, sir, in the Latin," said Father Peter.

"Prove it, Pether—prove it."

"It should be *non tantum*, sir.

"By what rule, Pether?"

"Why, sir, there's a phrase in Corderius's Colloquies that I could condimn you from, if I had the book."

"Pether, you think you're a scholar, and, to do you justice, you're cute enough sometimes; but, Pether, you didn't travel for it, as I did—nor were you obliged to leap out of a college windy in Paris, at the time of the French Revolution, for your larning, as I was: not you, man, you ate the king's mutton comfortably at home in Maynooth, instead of travelling for it, like your betters."

"I'll appale to this gintleman," said Father Peter, turning to the stranger. "Are you a classical scholar, sir—that is, do you understand Latin?"

"What kind?" demanded the stranger, dryly.

"If you have read Corderius's Colloquies, it will do," said Father Peter.

"No, sir," replied the other, "but I have read his commentator, *Bardolphus*, who wrote a treatise upon the *Ogalvus* of the ancients."

"Well, sir, if you did, it's probable that you may be able to understand our dispute, so——"

[1] Drop—the least quantity.

"Pether, I'm afeard you've gotten into the wrong box; for I say he's no chicken that read *Bardolphus*, I can tell you that; I had my own trouble with him: but, at any rate, will you take your punch, man alive, and don't bother us with your Latin."

"I beg your pardon, Father Ned: I insist that I'm right; and I'll convince you that you're wrong, if God spares me to see Corderius to-morrow."

"Very well then, Pether, if you're to decide it to-morrow, let us have no more of it to-night."

During this conversation between the two reverend worthies, the group around the fire were utterly astonished at the erudition displayed in this learned dispute.

"Well, to be sure, larnin's a great thing, entirely," said M'Roarkin, aside, to Shane Fadh.

"Ah, Tom, there's nothing like it: well, any way, it's wondherful what *they* know!"

"Indeed it is, Shane—and in so short a time, too! Sure it's not more nor five or six years since Father Pether there used to be digging praties on the one ridge with myself—by the same token, an excellent *spadesman* he was—and now he knows more nor all the Protestant parsons in the Diocy."

"Why, how could *they* know anything, when they don't belong to the thrue church?" said Shane.

"Thrue for you, Shane," replied M'Roarkin; "I disremimbered that clincher."

This discourse ran parallel with the dispute between the two priests, but in so low a tone as not to reach the ear of the *classical* champions, who would have ill brooked this eulogium upon Father Peter's agricultural talent.

"Don't bother us, Pether, with your arguing, to-night," said Father Neddy, "it's enough for you to be seven days in the week at your disputation.—Sir, I drink to our better acquaintance."

"With all my heart, sir," replied the stranger.

"Father Ned," said Nancy, "the gintleman was going to tell us sthrange story, sir, and maybe your reverence would wish to hear it, Docthor."

"Certainly, Nancy, we'll be very happy to hear any story the gintleman may plase to tell us; but, Nancy, achora, before he begins, what if you'd just fry a slice or two of that glorious flitch, hanging over his head, in the corner?—that, and about six eggs, Nancy, and you'll have the priest's blessing, *gratis*."

"Why, Father Ned, it's too fresh, entirely—sure it's not a week hanging yet."

"Sorra matter, Nancy dheelish, we'll take with all that—just try your hand at a slice of it. I rode eighteen miles, and took four tumblers since I dined, and I feel a craving, Nancy, a *whacuum* in my stomach, that's rather troublesome."

"To be sure, Father Ned, you must get a slice, with all the veins of my heart; but I thought maybe you wouldn't like it *so fresh*: but

what on earth will we do for eggs, for there's not an egg undher the roof with me."

"Biddy, a hagur," said Father Ned, "just slip out to Molshey Johnston, and tell her to send me six eggs for a rasher, by the same token that I heard two or three hens cackling in the byre, as I was going to Conference this morning."

"Well, Docthor," said Pat Frayne, when Biddy had been gone some time, on which embassy she delayed longer than the priest's judgment, influenced by the cravings of his stomach, calculated to be necessary—"Well, Docthor, I often pity you for fasting so long; I'm sure, I dunna how you can stand it at all, at all."

"Troth, and you may well wonder, Pat; but we have *that* to support us, that you, or anyone like you, know nothing about—*inward* support, Pat—inward support."

"Only for that, Father Ned," said Shane Fadh, "I suppose you could never get through with it."

"Very right, Shane—very right: only for it, we never could do.—What the dickens is keeping this girl with the eggs?—why, she might be at Mr. Morrow's, here, since. By the way, Mr. Morrow, you must come over to our church; you're a good neighbour, and a worthy fellow, and it's a thousand pities you should be damned."

"Why, Docthor," said Andy, "do you really believe I'll be damned?"

"Ah, Mr. Morrow, don't ask me that question—out of the pale, you know—out of the pale."

"Then you think, sir, there's no chance for me, at all," said Andy, smiling.

"Not the laste, Andy; you must go this way," said Father Ned, striking the floor with the butt end of his whip "to the lower regions; and, upon my knowledge, to tell you the truth, I'm sorry for it, for you're a worthy fellow."

"Ah, Docthor," said Ned, "it's a great thing entirely to be born in the true church—one's always sure, then."

"Ay, ay; you may say that, Ned," returned the priest; "come or go what will, a man's always safe at the long run, except he dies without his clargy.—Shane, hand me the jug, if you please.—Where did you get this stuff, Nancy?—faith, it's excellent."

"You forget, Father Ned, that that's a sacret.—But here's Biddy with the eggs, and now you'll have your rasher in no time."

During this conversation, Father Peter, turning to Alick M'Kinley, said, "Alick, isn't your eldest son at the Latin?"

"He is, sir," said Alick.

"How long is he at it, Alick?"

"About six months, sir."

"And do you know what book he's reading?"

"Not a one of myself knows," said Alick, "but I know he has a great batch of them."

"You couldn't tell me if he has got a Cordery?"

"He has, sir," said Alick, "a jacket and trousers of it."

"Of what?" said the curate, looking at him with surprise.

"Of corduroy," said the other.

"Oh, I mean a book!" said Father Peter.

"Consumin' to the know I know what's the name of one of them," replied Alick.

"I wish to heavens I had one, till I'd confute that man!" said Father Peter, looking with a most mortified visage into the fire.

When the two clergymen had discussed the rashers and eggs, and while the happy group were making themselves intimately acquainted with a fresh jug of punch, as it circulated round the table:

"Now, sir," said Father Ned to the stranger, "we'll hear your story with the greatest satisfaction possible; but I think you might charge your tumbler before you set to it."

When the stranger had complied with this last hint: "Well, gentlemen," said he, "as I am rather fatigued, will you excuse me for the position I am about to occupy, which is simply to stretch myself along the hob here, with my head upon this straw hassock; and if you have no objection to that, I will relate the story."

To this, of course, a general assent was given. When he was stretched completely at his ease—

"Well, upon my veracity," observed Father Peter, "the gentleman's supernaturally long."

"Yes, Pether," replied Father Neddy, "but observe his position—*Polysyllaba cuncta supina*, as Prosody says.—Arrah, salvation to me, but you're dull, man, afther all!—but we're interrupting the gentleman. Sir, go on, if you plase, with your story."

"Give me a few minutes," said he, "until I recollect the particulars."

He accordingly continued quiescent for two or three minutes more, apparently arranging the materials of his intended narration, and then commenced to gratify the eager expectations of his auditory—by emitting those nasal enunciations which are the usual accompaniments of sleep!

"Why, bad luck to the morsel of 'im but's asleep," said Ned; "Lord pardon me for swearin' in your reverence's presence."

"That's certainly the language of a sleeping man," replied Father Neddy; "but there might have been a little more respect than all that snoring comes to. Your health, boys!"

The stranger had now wound up his nasal organ to a high pitch, after which he commenced again with somewhat of a lower and finer tone.

"He's beginning a new paragraph," observed Father Peter, with a smile at the joke.

"Not at all," said Father Neddy, "he's turning the tune; don't you perceive he's snoring, 'God save the King,' in the key of *bassrelievo*."

"I'm no judge of instrumental music, as you are," said the curate, "but I think it's liker the 'Dead March of Saul' than 'God save the King;' however, if you be right, the gentleman certainly snores in a truly loyal strain."

"That," said little M'Roarkin, "is liker the swine's melody, or the Bedfordshire hornpipe—he—he—he!"

"The poor gintleman's tired," observed Nancy, "after a hard day's thravelling.'

"I daresay he is," said Father Ned, in the sincere hospitality of his country; "at all events take care of him, Nancy, he's a stranger, and get the best supper you can for him—he appears to be a truly respectable and well-bred man."

"I think," said M'Kinley, with a comical grin, "you might know that by his high-flown manner of sleeping—he snores very politely, and like a gintleman, all out."

"Well done, Alick," said the priest, laughing; "go home, boys, it's near bedtime; Paddy, ma bouchal, are the horses ready?"

"They'll be at the door in a jiffey, your reverence," said Paddy, going out.

In the course of a few minutes he returned, exclaiming, "Why, thin, is it thinkin' to venthur out sich a night as it's comin' on, yer reverences would be? and it plashin' as if it came out of methers! Sure the life would be dhrownded out of both of ye, and yees might *cotch* a faver into the bargain."

"Sit down, gintlemen," said Ned; "sit down, Father Ned, you and Father Pether—we'll have another tumbler; and, as it's my turn to tell a story, I'll give yees something to amuse yees—the best I can, and, you all know, who can do more?"

"Very right, Ned; but let us see"—replied Father Ned, putting his head out of the door, to ascertain what the night did; "Come, Pether, it's good to be on the safe side of any house in such a storm; we must only content ourselves till it gets fair. Now, Ned, go on with your story, and let it be as pleasant as possible."

"Never fear, your reverence," replied Ned; "here goes—and healths apiece to begin with."

THE THREE TASKS;

Or, The Little House under the Hill.

"EVERY person in the parish knows the purty knoll that rises above the Routing Burn, some few miles from the renowned town of Knockimdowny, which, as all the world must allow, wants only houses and inhabitants to be as big a place as the great town of Dublin itself. At the foot of this little hill, just under the shelter of a dacent pebble of a rock, something about the bulk of half a dozen churches, one would be apt to see—if they knew how to look sharp, otherwise they mightn't be able to make it out from the grey rock above it, except by the smoke that *ris* from the chimbley—Nancy Magennis's

little cabin, snug and cosey with its corrag,[1] or *ould man* of branches, standing on the windy side of the door, to keep away the blast.

"Upon my word, it was a dacent little residence in its own way, and so was Nancy herself, for that matther; for, though a poor *widdy*, she was very *punctwell* in paying for Jack's schooling, as I often heard ould Terry M'Phaudeen say, who tould me the story. Jack, indeed, grew up a fine slip; and, for hurling, football playing, and lepping, hadn't his likes in the five quarters of the parish. It's he that knew how to handle a spade and a raping-hook, and, what was betther nor all that, he was kind and tindher to his poor ould mother, and would let her want for nothing. Before he'd go to his day's work in the morning, he'd be sure to bring home from the clear spring-well that ran out of the other side of the rock, a pitcher of water to serve her for the day; nor would he forget to bring in a good creel of turf from the snug little peat-stack that stood, thatched with rushes, before the door, and leave it in the corner, beside the fire; so that she had nothing to do but put over her hand, without rising off her sate, and put down a sod when she wanted it.

"Nancy, on her part, kept Jack very clane and comfortable; his linen, though coorse, was always a good colour, his working clothes tidily mended at all times; and when he'd have occasion to put on his good coat to work in, for the first time, Nancy would sew on the fore-part of each sleeve a stout patch of ould cloth, to keep them from being worn by the spade; so that when she'd rip these off them every Saturday night, they would look as new and fresh as if he hadn't been working in them at all, at all.

"Then, when Jack came home in the winter nights, it would do your heart good to see Nancy sitting at her wheel, singing '*Stachan Varagah*,' or '*Peggy Na Laveen*,' beside a purty clear fire, with a small pot of *Murphys* boiling on it for their supper, or laid up in a wooden dish, comfortably covered with a clane praskeen, on the well-swept hearthstone; whilst the quiet, dancing blaze might be seen blinking in the nice earthen plates and dishes that stood over against the side wall of the house. Just before the fire you might see Jack's stool waiting for him to come home; and, on the other side, the brown cat washing her face with her paws, or sitting beside the dog that lay asleep, quite happy and contented, purring her song, and now and then looking over at Nancy, with her eyes half shut, as much as to say, 'Catch a happier pair nor we are, Nancy, if you can.'

"Sitting quietly on the roost above the door were Dickey the cock, and half-a-dozen hens, that kept this honest pair in eggs and *egg-milk* for the best part of the year—besides enabling Nancy to sell two or three clutches of March-birds every season, to help to buy wool for Jack's big coat and her own grey-beard gown and striped red and blue petticoat.

[1] The *Corrag* is a roll of branches tied together when green, and used for the purposes mentioned in the story. It is six feet high, and much thicker than a sack, and is changed to either side of the door, according to the direction from which the wind blows.

"To make a long story short, no two could be more comfortable, considering everything. But, indeed, Jack was always obsarved to have a dacent, ginteel turn with him: for he'd scorn to see a bad gown on his mother, or a broken Sunday coat on himself; and instead of drinking his little earning in a sheebeen-house, and then eating his praties dry, he'd take care to have something to *kitchen*[1] them; so that he was not only snug and dacent of a Sunday, regarding wearables, but so well-fed and rosy, that the point of a rush would take a drop of blood out of his cheek.[2] Then he was the comeliest and best-looking young man in the parish, could tell lots of droll stories, and sing scores of merry songs, that would make you split your sides with downright laughing; and when a wake or a dance would happen to be in the neighbourhood, maybe there wouldn't be many a sly look out from the purty girls for pleasant Jack Magennis.

"In this way lived Jack and his mother, as happy and continted as two lords; except now and thin, that Jack would feel a little consarn for not being able to lay past anything for the *sore foot*,[3] or that might enable him to think of marrying—for he was beginning to look about him for a wife; and why not, to be sure? But he was prudent, for all that, and didn't wish to bring a wife and small family into poverty and hardship without means to support them, as too many do.

"It was one fine, frosty, moonlight night—the sky was without a cloud, and the stars all blinking that it would delight anybody's heart to look at them, when Jack was crassing a bog that lay a few fields beyant his own cabin. He was just crooning the '*Humours of Glynn*,' in to himself, and thinking that it was a very hard case that he couldn't save anything at all, at all, to help him to the wife—when, on coming down a bank in the middle of the bog, he saw a dark-looking man leaning against a clamp of turf, and a black dog, with a pipe of tobacky in his mouth, sitting at his ase beside him, and he smoking as sober as a judge. Jack, however, had a stout heart, bekase his conscience was clear, and, barring being a little daunted, he wasn't very much afeard. 'Who is this coming down toardst us?' said the black-favoured man, as he saw Jack approaching them. 'It's Jack Magennis,' says the dog, making answer, and taking the pipe out of his mouth with his right paw, and after puffing away the smoke, and rubbing the end of it against his left leg, exactly as a Christian (this day's Friday, the Lord stand betune us and harm) would do against his sleeve, giving it at the same time to his comrade—'It's Jack Magennis,' says the dog, 'honest Widow Magennis's dacent son.' 'The very man,' says the other, back to him, 'that I'd wish to sarve, out of a thousand. —Arran, Jack Magennis, how is every tether-length of you?' says the

[1] Kitchen signifies any liquid with which solid food is diluted.

[2] This proverb, which is always used as above, but without being confined in its application to only one sex, is a general one in Ireland. In delicacy and beauty I think it inimitable.

[3] Accidents—future calamity—or old age.

ould fellow, putting the *furrawn*[1] on him—'and how is every bone in your body, Jack, my darling? I'll hould a thousand guineas,' says he, pointing to a great big bag that lay beside him, 'and that's only the tenth part of what's in this bag, Jack, that you're just going to be in luck to-night, above all nights in the year!'

"'And may worse never happen you, Jack, ma bouchal,' says the dog, putting in *his* tongue, then wagging his tail, and *houlding* out his paw to shake hands with Jack.

"'Gintlemen,' says Jack, never minding to give the dog his hand, bekase he heard it wasn't safe to touch the likes of him—'Gintlemen,' says he, 'ye're sitting far from the fire this frosty night.'

"'Why, that's true, Jack,' answers the ould fellow; 'but if we're sitting far from the fire, we're sitting very near the makins of it, man alive.' So, with this, he pulls the bag of goold over to him, that Jack might know by the jingle of the shiners what was in it.

"'Jack,' says dark-face, 'there's some born with a silver ladle in their mouth, and others with a wooden spoon; and if you'll just sit down on the one end of this clamp with me, and take a hand at the *five and ten*,' pulling out, as he spoke, a *deck* of cards, 'you may be a made man for the remainder of your life.'

"'Sir,' says Jack, 'with submission, both yourself and this cur—I mane,' says he, not wishing to give the dog offence—'both yourself and this dacent gintleman with the tail and claws upon him, have the advantage of me, in respect of knowing my name; for, if I don't mistake,' says he, putting his hand to his caubeen, 'I never had the pleasure of seeing either of ye before.'

"'Never mind that,' says the dog, taking back the pipe from the other, and clapping it in his mouth; 'we're both your well-wishers, anyhow, and it's now your own fault if you're not a rich man.'

"Jack, by this time, was beginning to think that they might be afther wishing to throw luck in his way; for he had often heard of men being made up entirely by the fairies, till there was no end to their wealth.

"'Jack,' says the black man, 'you had better be sed by us for this bout—upon the honour of a gintleman we wish you well: however, if you don't choose to take the ball at the right hop, another may, and you're welcome to toil all your life, and die a beggar after.'

"'Upon my reputation, what he says is true, Jack,' says the dog, in his turn, 'the lucky minute of your life is come; let it pass without doing what them that wishes your mother's son well desire you, and you'll die in a ditch.'

"'And what am I to do,' says Jack, 'that's to make me so rich all of a sudden?'

"'Why, only to sit down and take a game of cards with myself,' says black-brow, 'that's all, and I'm sure it's not much.'

"'And what is it to be for,' Jack inquires, 'for I have no money—tare-nation to the rap itself's in my company.'

[1] That frank, cordial manner of address which brings strangers suddenly to intimacy.

"'Well, you have yourself,' says the dog, putting up his fore-claw along his nose, and winking at Jack, 'you have yourself, man—don't be faint-hearted :—he'll bet the contents of this bag ;' and with that the ould thief gave it another great big shake, to make the guineas jingle again—'It's ten thousand guineas in hard gould; if he wins, you're to sarve him for a year and a day; and if he loses, you're to have the bag.'

"'And the money that's in it,' says Jack, wishing, you see, to make a sure bargain, anyhow.

"'Ev'ry penny,' answered the ould chap, 'if you win it; and there's fifty to one in your favour.'

"By this time the dog had got into a great fit of laughing at Jack's sharpness about the money. 'The money that's in it, Jack,' says he, and he took the pipe out of his mouth, and laughed till he brought on a hard fit of coughing; 'O, by this and by that,' says he, 'but that bates Bannagher! and you're to get it ev'ry penny, you thief of the world, if you win it;' but for all that he seemed to be laughing at something that Jack wasn't up to.

"At any rate, surely, they palavered Jack betune them, until he sot down and consinted. 'Well,' says he, scratching his head, 'why, worse nor lose I can't, so here goes for one trial at the shiners, anyhow!'

"'Now,' says the obscure gintleman, just whin the first card was in his hand, ready to be laid down, 'you're to sarve me for a year and a day, if I win; and if I lose, you shall have all the money in the bag.'

"'Exactly,' says Jack, and just as he said the word, he saw the dog putting the pipe in his pocket, and turning his head away for fraid Jack would see him breaking his sides laughing. At last, when he got his face sobered, he looks at Jack, and says, 'Surely, Jack, if you win, you must get all the money in the bag; and upon my reputation, you may build castles in the air with it, you'll be so rich.'

"This plucked up Jack's courage a little, and to work they went; but how could it end otherwise than Jack to loose betune two such knowing schemers as they soon turned out to be? For what do you think, but as Jack was beginning the game, the dog tips him a wink, laying his fore-claw along his nose, as before, as much as to say, 'Watch me, and you'll win,'—turning round, at the same time, and showing Jack a nate little looking-glass, that was set in his oxther, in which Jack saw, dark as it was, the spots of all the other fellow's cards, as he thought, so that he was cock sure of bating him. But they were a pair of downright knaves, anyhow; for Jack, by playing to the cards that he saw in the looking-glass, instead of to them the other held in his hand, lost the game and the money. In short, he saw that he was blarnied and chated by them both; and when the game was up he plainly tould them as much.

"'What, you scoundrel!' says the black fellow, starting up and catching him by the collar, 'dare you go for to impache my honour?'

"'Leather him if he says a word,' says the dog, running over on

his hind legs, and laying his shut paw upon Jack's nose, 'Say another word, you rascal,' says he, 'and I'll *down* you;' with this the ould fellow gives him another shake.

"'I don't blame *you* so much,' says Jack to him, 'it was the looking-glass that desaved me; that cur's nothing but a *blackleg*.'

"'What looking-glass, you knave you?' says dark-face, giving him a fresh haul.

"'Why, the one I saw under the dog's oxther,' replied Jack.

"'Under my oxther! you swindling rascal,' replied the dog, giving him a pull by the other side of the collar; 'did ever any honest pair of gintlemen hear the like?—but he only wants to break through the agreement; so let us turn him at once into an ass, and then he'll brake no more bargains, nor strive to take in honest men and win their money. Me a blackleg!' So saying, the dark fellow drew his two hands over Jack's jaws, and in a twinkling there was a pair of ass's ears growing up out of his head. When Jack found this, he knew that he wasn't in good hands; so he thought it best to get himself as well out of the scrape as possible.

"'Gintlemen, be aisy,' says he, 'and let us understand one another: I'm very willing to sarve you for a year and a day, but I've one request to ax, and it's this: I've a helpless ould mother at home, and if I go with you now she'll break her heart with grief first, and starve afterwards. Now, if your honour will give me a year to work hard, and lay in provision to support her while I'm away, I'll serve you with all the veins of my heart—for a bargain's a bargain.'

"With this the dog gave his companion a pluck by the skirt, and, after some chat together, that Jack didn't hear, they came back and said they would comply with his wishes that far; 'so, on to-morrow twelvemonth, Jack,' says the dark fellow, 'the dog here will come to your mother's, and if you follow him, he'll bring you safe to my castle.'

"'Very well, your honour,' says Jack; 'but as dogs resemble one another so much, how will I know him whin he comes?'

"'Why,' answers the other, 'he'll have a green ribbon about his neck, and a pair of Wellington boots on his hind legs.'

"'That's enough, sir,' says Jack, 'I can't mistake him in that dress, so I'll be ready; but, gintlemen, if it would be plasing to you both, I'd every bit as soon not go home with these,' and he handled the brave pair of ears he had got, as he spoke. 'The truth is, gintlemen, I'm deluding enough without them; and as I'm so modest you persave, why if you'd take them away, you'd oblige me!'

"To this they had no objection, and during that year Jack wrought night and day, that he might be able to lave as much provision with his poor mother as would support her in his absence; and when the morning came that he was to bid her farewell, he went down on his two knees and got her blessing. He then left her with tears in his eyes, and promised to come back the very minute his time would be up. 'Mother,' says he, 'be kind to your little family here, and feed them well, as they are all you'll have to keep you company till you see me again.'

"His mother then stuffed his pockets with bread, till they stuck out behind him, and gave him a crooked sixpence for luck; after which he got his staff, and was just ready to tramp, when, sure enough, he spies his ould friend the dog, with the green ribbon about his neck, and the Wellington boots upon his hind legs. He didn't go in, but waited on the outside till Jack came out. They then set off, but no one knows how far they travelled, till they reached the dark gintleman's castle, who appeared very glad to see Jack, and gave him a hearty welcome.

"The next day, in consequence of his long journey, he was ax'd to do nothing; but in the coorse of the evening the dark chap brought him into a long, frightful room, where there were three hundred and sixty-five hooks sticking out of the wall, and on every hook but one a man's head. When Jack saw this agreeable sight, his dinner began to quake within him; but he felt himself still worse, when his master pointed to the empty hook, saying, 'Now, Jack, your business to-morrow is to clane out a stable that wasn't claned for the last seven years, and if you don't have it finished before dusk—do you see that hook?'

"'Ye—yes;' replied Jack, hardly able to spake. 'Well, if you don't have it finished before dusk your head will be hanging on that hook as soon as the sun sets.'

"'Very well, your honour,' replied Jack, scarcely knowing what he said, or he wouldn't have said 'very well' to such a bloody-minded intention, anyhow—'Very well,' says he, 'I'll do my best, and all the world knows that the best can do no more.'

"Whilst this discourse was passing betune them, Jack happened to look at the upper end of the room, and there he saw one of the beautifullest faces that ever was seen on a woman, looking at him through a little panel that was in the wall. She had a white, snowy forehead—such eyes, and cheeks, and teeth, that there's no coming up to them; and the clusters of dark hair that hung about her beautiful temples!—by the laws, I'm afeard of falling in love with her myself, so I'll say no more about her, only that she would charm the heart of a wheelbarrow. At any rate, in spite of all the ould fellow could say—heads and hooks, and all, Jack couldn't help throwing an eye, now and then, to the panel; and to tell the truth, if he had been born to riches and honour, it would be hard to fellow him, for a good face and a good figure.

"'Now, Jack,' said his master, 'go and get your supper, and I hope you'll be able to perform your task—if not, off goes your head.'

"'Very well, your honour,' says Jack, again scratching it in the hoith of perplexity, 'I must only do what I can.'

"The next morning Jack was up with the sun, if not before him, and hard at his task; but before breakfast time he lost all heart, and little wonder he should, poor fellow, bekase for every one shovelfull he'd throw out, there would come three more in: so that instead of making his task less, according as he got on, it became greater. He was now in the greatest dilemmy, and didn't know how to manage, so

he was driven at last to such an amplush, that he had no other shift for employment, only to sing '*Paddeen O'Rafferty*' out of mere vexation, and dance the hornpipe trebling step to it, cracking his fingers, half mad, through the stable. Just in the middle of this tantrum, who comes to the dour to call him to his breakfast but the beautiful crathur he saw the evening before peeping at him through the panel. At this minute Jack had so hated himself by the dancing, that his handsome face was in a fine glow, entirely.

"'I think,' said she to Jack, with one of her own sweet smiles, 'that this is an odd way of performing your task.'

"'Och, thin, 'tis you that may say that,' replies Jack; 'but it's myself that's willing to have my head hung up any day, just for one sight of you, you darling.'

"'Where did you come from?' asked the lady, with another smile that bate the first all to nothing.

"'Where did I come from, is it?' answered Jack; 'why, death-alive! did you never hear of ould Ireland, my jewel!—hem—I mane, plase your ladyship's honour.'

"'No,' she answered; 'where is that country?'

"'Och, by the honour of an Irishman,' says Jack, 'that takes the shine!—not heard of Erin—the Imerald Isle—the Jim of the ocean, where all the men are brave and honourable, and all the women—hem—I mane the ladies—chaste and beautiful?'

"'No,' said she; 'not a word: but if I stay longer I may get you blame—come into your breakfast, and I'm sorry to find that you have done so little at your task. Your master's a man that always acts up to what he threatens; and, if you have not this stable cleared out before dusk, your head will be taken off your shoulders this night."

"'Why thin,' says Jack, 'my beautiful darl—plase your honour's ladyship—if he hangs it up, will you do me the favour, *acushla machree*, to turn my head *toardst* that same panel where I saw a sartin fair face that I won't mintion: and if you do, let me alone for watching a sartin purty face I'm acquainted with.'

"'What means *cushla machree?*' inquired the lady, as she turned to go away.

"'It manes that you're the pulse of my heart, avourneen, plase your ladyship's reverence,' says Jack.

"'Well,' said the lovely crathur, 'any time you speak to me in future, I would rather you would omit terms of honour, and just call me after the manner of your own country; instead, for instance, of calling me your ladyship, I would be better pleased if you called me *cushla*—something—' '*Cushla machree, ma vourneen*—the pulse of my heart—my darling,' said Jack, consthering it (the thief) for her, for fraid she wouldn't know it well enough.

"'Yes,' she replied, '*cushla machree*; well, as I can pronounce it, *acushla machree*, will you come into your breakfast?' said the darling, giving Jack a smile that would be enough, any day, to do up the heart of an Irishman. Jack, accordingly, went after her, thinking of nothing except herself; but on going in he could see no sign of her, so he sat

down to his breakfast, though a single ounce, barring a couple of pounds of beef, the poor fellow couldn't ate, at that bout, for thinking of her.

"Well, he went again to his work, and thought he'd have better luck; but it was still the ould game—three shovel-fulls would come in for ev'ry one he'd throw out; and now he began, in earnest, to feel something about his heart that he didn't like, bekase he couldn't, for the life of him, help thinking of the three hundred and sixty-four heads and the empty hook. At last he gave up the work entirely, and took it into his head to *make himself scarce* from about the ould fellow's castle altogether; and without more to do he set off, never saying as much as 'good-bye' to his master; but he hadn't got as far as the lower end of the yard when his ould friend, the dog, steps out of a kennel, and meets him full butt in the teeth.

"'So, Jack,' says he, 'you're going to give us leg bail, I see; but walk back with yourself, you spalpeen, this minute, and join your work, or if you don't,' says he, 'it will be worse for your health. I'm not so much your enemy now as I was, bekase you have a friend in coort that you know nothing about; so just do whatever you are bid, and keep never minding.'

"Jack went back with a heavy heart, as you may be sure, knowing that, whenever the black cur began to blarney him, there was no good to come in his way. He accordingly went into the stable, but consuming to the hand's turn he did, knowing it would be only useless; for, instead of clearing it out, he'd be only filling it.

"It was now near dinner-time, and Jack was very sad and sorrowful—as how could he be otherwise, poor fellow, with such a bloody-minded ould chap to dale with?—when up comes the darling of the world again to call him to his dinner.

"Well, Jack,' says she, with her white arms so beautiful, and her dark clusters tossed about by the motion of the walk, 'now are you coming on at your task?' 'How am I coming on, is it? Och, thin, says Jack, giving a good-humoured smile through the frown that was on his face, 'plase your lady—*acushla machree*—it's all over with me; for I've still the same story to tell, and off goes my head, as sure as it's on my shoulders, this blessed night.'

'That would be a pity, Jack,' says she, 'for there are worse heads on worse shoulders; but will you give *me* the shovel?' 'Will I give *you* the shovel, is it?—Och, thin, wouldn't I be a right big baste to do the likes of that, anyhow?' says Jack. 'What! *avourneen dheelish!* to stand up with myself, and let this hard shovel into them beautiful, soft, white hands of your own! Faix, my jewel, if you knew but all, my mother's son's not the man to do such a disgraceful turn as to let a lady like you take the shovel out of his hand, and he standing with his mouth under his nose looking at you—not myself, *avourneen!* we have no such ungenteel manners as that in *our* country.' 'Take my advice, Jack,' says she, pleased in her heart at what Jack said, for all she didn't purtend it—'give me the shovel, and, depend upon it, I'll do more in a short time to clear the stable than you would for years.'

'Why, thin, *avourneen*, it goes to my heart to refuse you; but, for all that, may I never see yesterday, if a taste of it will go into your purty, white fingers,' says the thief, praising her to her face all the time; 'my head may go off any day, and welcome, but death before dishonour. Say no more, darling; but tell your father I'll be in to my dinner immediately.'

"Notwithstanding all this, by jingo the lady would not be put off. Like a ra-al woman, she'd have her way. So, on telling Jack that she didn't intend to work with the shovel at all, at all, but only to take it for a minute in her hand, at long last he gave it to her; she then struck it three times on the threshel of the door, and, giving it back into his hand, tould him to try what he could do. Well, sure enough, now there was a change; for instead of three shovel-fulls coming in, as before, when he threw one out, there went nine more along with it. Jack, in coorse, couldn't do less than thank the lovely crathur for her assistance; but when he raised his head to speak to her, she was gone. I needn't say, howsomever, that he went in to his dinner with a light heart and a murdhering appetite; and when the ould fellow axed him how he was coming on, Jack tould him that he was doing gloriously. 'Remember the empty hook, Jack,' said he. 'Never fear, your honour,' answered Jack; 'if I don't finish my task, you may bob my head off any time.'

"Jack now went out, and was a short time getting through his job, for before the sun set it was finished; and he came into the kitchen, ate his supper, and, sitting down before the fire, sung 'Love among the Roses' and the 'Black Joke,' to vex the ould fellow.

"This was one task over, and his head was safe for that bout; but that night, before he went to bed, his master called him upstairs, brought him into the bloody room, and gave him his orders for the next day. 'Jack,' says he, 'I have a wild filly that has never been caught, and you must go to my demesne to-morrow and catch her, or if you don't—look there,' says the big blackguard, 'on that hook it hangs before to-morrow, if you haven't her before sunset in the stable that you claned yesterday.' 'Very well, your honour,' says Jack, carelessly; 'I'll do everything in my power, and if I fail I can't help it.'

"The next morning Jack was out with a bridle in his hand, going to catch the filly. As soon as he got into the demesne, sure enough, there she was in the middle of a green field, grazing quite at her ase. When Jack saw this he went over towards her, houlding out his hat, as if it was full of oats: but he kept the hand that had the bridle in it behind his back, for fraid she'd see it and make off. Well, my dear, on he went till he was almost within grip of her, cock sure that he had nothing more to do than slip the bridle over her neck and secure her; but he made a bit of a mistake in his reckoning, for though she smelt and snoaked about him, just as if she didn't care a feed of oats whether he caught her or not, yet when he boulted over to hould her fast, she was off like a shot, with her tail cocked, to the far end of the demesne, and Jack had to set off hot foot after her. All, however was to no purpose; he couldn't come next or near her for the rest of

the day, and there she kept coorsing about him, from one field to another, till he hadn't a blast of breath in his body.

"In this state was Jack when the beautiful crathur came out to call him home to his breakfast, walking with the pretty small feet and light steps of her own, upon the green fields, so bright and beautiful, scarcely bending the grass and flowers as she went along, the darling.

"'Jack,' says she, 'I fear you have as difficult a task to-day as you had yesterday."

"'Why, and it's you that may say that with your own purty mouth,' says Jack, says he: for out of breath and all as he was, he couldn't help giving her a bit of blarney, the rogue.

"'Well, Jack,' says she, 'take my advice, and don't tire yourself any longer by attempting to catch her; truth's best—I tell you, you could never do it: come home to your breakfast, and when you return again, just amuse yourself as well as you can until dinner time.'

"'Och, och!' says Jack, striving to look, the sly thief, as if she had promised to help him—'I only wish I was a king, and, by the powers, I know who would be my queen anyhow; for it's your own sweet lady—*savourneen dheelish*—I say, amn't I bound to you for a year and a day longer, for promising to give me a lift, as well as for what you done yesterday?'

"'Take care, Jack,' says she, smiling, however, at his ingenuity in striving to trap her into a promise, 'I don't think I made any promise of assistance.'

"'You didn't?' says Jack, wiping his face with the skirt of his coat, 'cause why?—you see pocket-handkerchiefs weren't invented in them times: 'why, thin, may I never live to see yesterday, if there's not as much rale beauty in that smile that's divarting itself about them sweet breathing lips of yours and in them two eyes of light that's breaking both their hearts laughing at me this minute, as would encourage any poor fellow to expect a good turn from you—that is, whin you could do it, without hurting or harming yourself; for it's he would be the right rascal that could take it, if it would injure a silken hair of your head.'

"'Well,' said the lady, with another roguish smile, 'I shall call you home to your dinner, at all events.'

"When Jack went back from his breakfast he didn't slave himself after the filly any more, but walked about to view the demesne, and the avenues, and the green walks, and nice temples, and fish-ponds and rookeries, and everything, in short, that was worth seeing. Towards dinner time, however, he began to have an eye to the way the sweet crathur was to come, and sure enough it's she that wasn't one minute late.

"'Well,' Jack,' says she, 'I'll keep you no longer in doubt,' for the tender-hearted crathur saw that Jack, although he didn't wish to let an to her, was fretting every now and then about the odd hook and the bloody room—'So, Jack,' says she, 'although I didn't promise, yet I'll perform;' and with that she pulled a small ivory whistle out of her pocket, and gave three blasts on it that brought the wild filly up

to her very hand, as quick as the wind. She then took the bridle, and threw it over the baste's neck, giving her up, at the same time, to Jack. 'You needn't fear now, Jack,' says she, 'you will find her as quiet as a lamb, and as tame as you wish : as a proof of it, just walk before her, and you will see she will follow you to any part of the field.'

"Jack, you may be sure, paid her as many and as sweet compliments as he could, and never heed one from his country for being able to say something toothsome to the ladies. At any rate, if he laid it on thick the day before, he gave her two or three additional coats this time, and the innocent soul went away smiling, as usual.

"When Jack brought the filly home, the dark fellow, his master, if dark before, was a perfect tunder-cloud this night : bedad, he was nothing less than near bursting with vexation, bekase the thieving ould sinner intended to have Jack's head upon the hook, but he fell short in his reckoning now as well as before. Jack sung 'Love among the Roses,' and the 'Black Joke,' to help him into better timper.

"'Jack,' says he, striving to make himself speak pleasant to him, 'you've got two difficult tasks over you ; but you know the third time's the charm—take care of the next.'

"'No matter about that,' says Jack, speaking up to him stiff and stout, bekase, as the dog tould him, he knew he had a friend in coort —'let's hear what it is, anyhow.'

"'To-morrow, then,' says the other, 'you're to rob a crane's nest on the top of a beech tree which grows in the middle of a little island in the lake that you saw, yesterday, in my demesne ; you're to have neither boat, nor oar, nor any kind of conveyance, but just as you stand ; and if you fail to bring me the eggs, or if you break one of them—look here !' says he, again pointing to the odd hook, for all this discourse took place in the bloody room.

"'Good again,' says Jack ; 'if I fail, I know my doom.'

"'No, you don't, you spalpeen,' says the other, getting vexed with him entirely, for I'll roast you till you're half dead, and ate my dinner off you, after ; and, what is more than that, you blackguard, you must sing the 'Black Joke,' all the time for my amusement.'

"'Div'l fly away with you,' thought Jack, 'but you're fond of music, you vagabond.'

"The next morning Jack was going round and round the lake, trying about the edge of it, if he could find any place shallow enough to wade in ; but he might as well go to wade the *say*, and what was worse of all, if he attempted to swim, it would be like a tailor's goose —straight to the bottom ; so he kept himself safe on dry land, still expecting a visit from the 'lovely crathur,' but, bedad, his good luck failed him for *wanst*; for, instead of seeing her coming over to him, so mild and sweet, who does he obsarve steering, at a dog's trot, but his ould friend the smoking cur. 'Confusion to that cur,' says Jack to himself, 'I know now there's some bad fortune before me, or he wouldn't be coming acrass me.'

"'Come home to your breakfast, Jack,' says the dog, walking up to him, 'it's breakfast time.'

"'Ay,' says Jack, scratching his head, 'it's no great matter whether I do or not, for I bleeve my head's hardly worth a flat-dutch cabbage at the present speaking.'

"'Why, man, it was never worth so much,' says the baste, pulling out his pipe and putting it in his mouth, when it lit at once.

"'Take care of yourself,' says Jack, quite desperate—for he thought he was near the end of his tether—'take care of yourself, you dirty cur, or maybe I might take a gintleman's toe from the nape of your neck.'

"'You had better keep a straight tongue in your head,' says four legs, 'while it's on your shoulders, or I'll break every bone in your skin.—Jack, you're a fool,' says he, checking himself, and speaking kindly to him—'you're a fool ; didn't I tell you the other day to do what you were bid, and keep never minding?'

"'Well,' thought Jack to himself, 'there's no use in making him any more my enemy than he is—particularly as I'm in such a hobble.'

"'You lie,' says the dog, as if Jack had spoken *out* to him, wherein he only thought the words to himself, 'you lie,' says he, 'I'm not, nor never was, your enemy, if you knew but all.'

"'I beg your honour's pardon,' answers Jack, 'for being so smart with your honour ; but, bedad, if you were in my case—if you expected your master to roast you alive—eat his dinner off your body—make you sing the "Black Joke" by way of music for him : and, to crown all, knew that your head was to be stuck upon a hook after—maybe you would be a little short in your temper as well as your neighbours.'

"'Take heart, Jack,' says the other, laying his foreclaw as knowingly as ever along his nose, and winking slyly at Jack, 'didn't I tell you that you have a friend in coort? the day's not past yet ; so cheer up ; who knows but there is luck before you still?'

"'Why, thin,' says Jack, getting a little cheerful, and wishing to crack a joke with him, 'but your honour's very fond of the pipe!'

"'Oh! don't you know, Jack,' says he, 'that that's the fashion at present among my tribe : sure all my brother puppies smoke now, and a man might as well be out of the world as out of the fashion, you know.'

"When they drew near home, they got quite thick entirely. 'Now,' says Jack, in a good-humoured way, 'if you can give me a lift in robbing this crane's nest, do ; at any rate, I'm sure your honour won't be my enemy. I know you have too much good nature in your face to be one that wouldn't help a lame dog over a stile—that is,' says he, taking himself up for fear of offending the other—'I'm sure you'd be always inclined to help the weak side.'

"'Thank you for the compliment,' says the dog, 'but didn't I tell you that you have a friend in coort?'

"When Jack went back to the lake, he could only sit and look sorrowfully at the tree, or walk about the edge of it, without being able to do anything else. He spent the whole day this-a-way till

dinner time, when, what would you have of it, but he sees the 'darling' coming out to him, as fair and as blooming as an angel. His heart, you may be sure, got up to his mouth, for he knew she would be apt to take him out of his difficulties. When she came up—

"'Now, Jack,' says she, 'there is not a minute to be lost, for I'm watched; and if it's discovered that I gave you any assistance we will be both destroyed.'

"'Oh, murther, sheery!' says Jack, 'fly back, avourneen machree—for rather than anything should happen *you*, I'd lose fifty lives.'

"'No," says she, 'I think I'll be able to get you over this, as well as the rest: so have a good heart and be faithful.' 'That's it,' replied Jack, 'that's it, acushla—my own *correcthur* to a shaving; I've a heart worth it's weight in bank-notes, and a more faithful boy isn't alive this day nor I am to yees all, ye darlings of the world.'

"She then pulled a small white wand out of her pocket, struck the lake, and there was the prettiest green ridge across it to the foot of the tree that ever eye beheld. 'Now,' says she, turning her back to Jack, and stooping down to do something that he couldn't see, 'take these, put them against the tree, and you will have steps to carry you to the top, but be sure, for *your* life and mine, not to forget any of them; if you do, my life will be taken to-morrow morning, for your master puts on my slippers with his own hands.'

"Jack was now going to swear that he would give up the whole thing, and surrender his head at once; but when he looked at her feet and saw no appearance of blood, he went over without more to do, and robbed the nest, taking down the eggs one by one, that he mightn't break them. There was no end to his joy as he secured the last egg; he instantly took down the toes, one after another, save and except the little one of the left foot, which, in his joy and hurry, he forgot entirely. He then returned by *the green ridge to the shore, and according as he went along it melted away into the water behind him.*

"'Jack,' says the charmer, 'I hope you forgot none of my toes.'

"'Is it me?' says Jack, quite sure that he had them all. 'Arrah, catch anyone from my country makin' a blunder of that kind.'

"'Well,' says she, 'let us see.' So, taking the toes, she placed them on again, just as if they had never been off. But, lo and behold! on coming to the last of the left foot, it wasn't forthcoming. 'Oh! Jack, Jack,' says she, 'you have destroyed me; to-morrow morning your master will notice the want of this toe, and that instant I'll be put to death.'

"'Lave that to me,' says Jack; 'by the powers, you won't lose a drop of your darling blood for it. Have you got a penknife about you? and I'll soon show you how you won't.'

"'What do you want with the knife?' she inquired.

"'What do I want with it?—why, to give you the best toe on both my feet, for the one I lost on you. Do you think I'd suffer you to want a toe, and I have ten thumping ones at your sarvice!—I'm not the man, you beauty, you, for such a shabby trick as that comes to.

"'But you forget,' says the lady, who was a little cooler than Jack, 'that none of yours would fit me.'

"'And must you die to-morrow, *acushla?*' asked Jack, in desperation

"'As sure as the sun rises,' answered the lady; 'for your master would know at once that it was by *my* toes the nest was robbed.'

"'By the powers,' observed Jack, 'he's one of the greatest ould vag—I mane, isn't he a terrible man, out and out, for a father?'

"Father!' says the darling—'he's not my father, Jack; he only wishes to marry me, and if I'm not able to outdo him before three days more, it's decreed that he must have me.'

"When Jack heard this, surely the Irishman must come out; there he stood, and began to wipe his eyes with the skirt of his coat, making as if he was crying, the thief of the world. 'What's the matter with you?' she asked.

"'Ah!' says Jack, 'you darling, I couldn't find in my heart to desave you; for I have no way at home to keep a lady like you, in proper style, at all at all; I would only bring you into poverty, and since you wish to know what ails me, I'm vexed that I'm not rich for your sake; and next, that that thieving ould villain's to have you; and by the powers, I'm crying for both these misfortunes together.'

"The lady couldn't help being touched and plaised with Jack's tinderness and ginerosity; so, says she, 'Don't be cast down, Jack, come or go what will, I won't marry him—I'd die first. Do you go home, as usual; but take care and don't sleep at all this night. Saddle the wild filly—meet me under the whitethorn bush at the end of the lawn, and we'll both leave him for ever. If you're willing to marry me, don't let poverty distress you, for I have more money than we'll know what to do with.'

"Jack's voice now began to tremble in earnest, with downright love and tinderness, as good right it had; so he promised to do everything just as she bid him, and then went home with a dacent appetite enough to his supper.

"You may be sure the ould fellow looked darker and grimmer than ever at Jack: but what could he do? Jack had done his duty; so he sat before the fire, and sung 'Love among the Roses,' and the 'Black Joke,' with a stouter and lighter heart than ever, while the black chap could have seen him skivered.

"When midnight came, Jack, who kept a hawk's eye to the night, was at the hawthorn with the wild filly, saddled and all—more betoken, she wasn't a bit wild then, but as tame as a dog. Off they set, like Erin-go-bragh, Jack and the lady, and never pulled bridle till it was one o'clock next day, when they stopped at an inn and had some refreshment. They then took the road again, full speed; however, they hadn't gone far, when they heard a great noise behind them, and the tramp of horses galloping like mad. 'Jack,' says the darling, on hearing the hubbub, 'look behind you, and see what's this.'

"'Och! by the elevens,' says Jack 'we're done at last; it's the dark fellow, and half the country, after us.' 'Put your hand,' says she, 'in the filly's right ear, and tell me what you find in it.' 'Nothing

at all at all,' says Jack, 'but a weeshy bit of a dry stick,' 'Throw it over your left shoulder,' says she, 'and see what will happen.'

"Jack did so at once, and there was a great grove of thick trees growing so close to one another that a dandy could scarcely get his arm betwixt them. 'Now,' said she, 'we are safe for another day.' 'Well,' said Jack, as he pushed on the filly, 'you're the jewel of the world, sure enough; and maybe it's you that won't live happy when we get to the Jim of the Ocean.'

"As soon as the dark-face saw what happened, he was obliged to scour the country for hatchets and hand-saws, and all kinds of sharp instruments, to hew himself and his men a passage through the grove. As the saying goes, many hands make light work, and, sure enough, it wasn't long till they had cleared a way for themselves, thick as it was, and set off with double speed after Jack and the lady.

"The next day, about one o'clock, he and she were after taking another small refreshment of roast-beef and porther, and pushing on, as before, when they heard the same tramping behind them, only it was ten times louder.

"'Here they are again,' says Jack; 'and I'm afeard they'll come up with us at last.'

"'If they do,' says she, 'they'll put us to death on the spot; but we must try somehow to stop them another day, if we can: search the filly's right ear again, and let me know what you find in it.'

"Jack pulled out a little three-cornered pebble, telling her that it was all he got. 'Well,' says she, 'throw it over your left shoulder like the stick.'

"No sooner said than done; and there was a great chain of high, sharp rocks in the way of divil-face and all his clan. 'Now,' says she, 'we have gained another day.' 'Tundher-and-turf!' says Jack, 'what's this for, at all at all?—but wait till I get you in the Immerald Isle, for this, and if you don't enjoy happy days anyhow, why I'm not sitting before you on this horse, by the same token that it's not a horse at all, but a filly though: if you don't get the hoith of good aiting and drinking—lashings of the best wine and whisky that the land can afford, my name's not Jack. We'll build a castle, and you'll have up-stairs and downstairs—a coach and six to ride in—lots of sarvints to attend on you, and full and plinty of everything; not to mintion—hem!—not to mintion that you'll have a husband that the fairest lady in the land might be proud of,' says he, stretching himself up in the saddle, and giving the filly a jag of the spurs, to show off a bit; although the coaxing rogue knew that the money which was to do all this was her own. At any rate, they spent the remainder of this day pleasantly enough, still moving on, though, as fast as they could. Jack, every now and then, would throw an eye behind, as if to watch their pursuers, wherein, if the truth was known, it was to get a peep at the beautiful glowing face and warm lips that were breathing all kinds of *fraagrancies* about him. I'll warrant he didn't envy the King upon his throne, when he felt the honeysuckle of her breath, like the smell of Father Ned's orchard there of a May morning.

"When *Fardoroughah*[1] found the great chain of rocks before him, you may set it down that he was likely to blow up with vexation; but, for all that, the first thing he blew up was the rocks—and that he might lose little or no time in doing it, he collected all the gunpowder and crowbars, spades and pickaxes, that could be found for miles about him, and set to it, working as if it was with inch of candle. For half a day there was nothing but boring and splitting, and driving of iron wedges, and blowing up pieces of rocks as big as little houses, until, by hard labour, they made a passage for themselves sufficient to carry them over. They then set off again, full speed; and great advantage they had over the poor filly that Jack and the lady rode on, for their horses were well rested, and hadn't to carry double, like Jack's. The next day they spied Jack and his beautiful companion, just about a quarter of a mile before them.

"'Now,' says dark-brow, 'I'll make any man's fortune for ever that will bring me them two, either living or dead, but, if possible, alive; so, spur on, for whoever secures them is a made man—but, above all things, make no noise.'

"It was now divil take the hindmost among the bloody pack—every spur was red with blood, and every horse smoking. Jack and the lady were jogging on *acrass* a green field, not suspecting that the rest were so near them, and talking over the pleasant days they would *spind* together in Ireland, when they *hears* the hue-and-cry once more at their very heels.

"'Quick as lightning, Jack,' says she, 'or we're lost—the right ear and the left shoulder, like thought—they're not three lengths of the filly from us!'

"But Jack knew his business; for just as a long, grim-looking villain, with a great rusty rapier in his hand, was within a single leap of them, and quite sure of either killing or making prisoners of them both, Jack flings a little drop of green water, that he got in the filly's ear, over his left shoulder, and in an instant there was a deep, dark gulf, filled with black, pitchy-looking water, between them. The lady now desired Jack to pull up the filly a bit, till they would see what would become of the dark fellow; but just as they turned round, the ould nager set spurs to his horse, and, in a fit of desperation, plunged himself, horse and all, into the gulf, and was never seen or heard of more. The rest that were with him went home, and began to quarrel about his wealth, and kept murdering and killing one another, until a single vagabond of them wasn't left alive to enjoy it.

"When Jack saw what happened, and that the bloodthirsty ould villain got what he desarved so richly, he was as happy as a prince, and ten times happier than most of them as the world goes, and she was every bit as delighted. 'We have nothing more to fear,' said the darling that put them all down so cleverly, seeing she was but a woman; but, bedad, it's she was the right sort of a woman—'all our dangers are now over, at least, all yours are; regarding myself,' says

[1] The dark man.

she, 'there is a trial before me yet, and that trial, Jack, depends upon your faithfulness and constancy.'

"'On me, is it?—Och, then, murder! isn't it a poor case entirely, that I have no way of showing you that you may depend your life upon me, only by telling you so?'

"'I do depend upon you,' says she—'and now, as you love me, do not, when the trial comes, forget her that saved you out of so many troubles, and made you such a great and wealthy man.'

"The foregoing part of this Jack could well understand, but the last part of it, making *collusion* to the wealth, was a little dark, he thought, bekase he hadn't fingered any of it at that time: still, he knew she was truth to the back bone, and wouldn't *desave* him. They hadn't travelled much farther, when Jack snaps his fingers, with a 'Whoo! by the powers, there it is, my darling—there it is, at long last!'

"'There is what, Jack?' said she, surprised, as well she might, at his mirth and happiness—'There is what?' says she.

"'Cheer up,' says Jack, 'there it is, my darling—the Shannon!—as soon as we get to the other side of it, we'll be in ould Ireland once more.'

"There was no end to Jack's good humour when he crossed the Shannon; and she was not a bit displased to see him so happy. They had now no enemies to fear, were in a civilised country, and among green fields and well-bred people. In this way they travelled at their ase, till they came within a few miles of the town of Knockimdowny, near which Jack's mother lived.

"'Now, Jack,' says she, 'I tould you that I would make you rich. You know the rock beside your mother's cabin; in the east end of that rock there is a loose stone, covered over with grey moss, just two feet below the cleft out of which the hanging rowan tree grows—pull that stone out, and you will find more goold than would make a duke. Neither speak to any person, nor let any living thing touch your lips till you come back to me, or you'll forget that you ever saw me, and I'll be left poor and friendless in a strange country.'

"'Why, thin, *manim asthee hu*,'[1] says Jack, 'but the best way to guard against that, is to touch your own sweet lips at the present time,' says he, giving her a smack that you'd hear, of a calm evening, acrass a couple of fields. Jack set off to touch the money with such speed that when he fell he scarcely waited to rise again; he was soon at the rock, anyhow, and without either doubt or disparagement, there was a cleft of ra-al goolden guineas, as fresh as daisies. The first thing he did, after he had filled his pockets with them, was to look if his mother's cabin was to the fore; and there surely it was, as snug as ever, with the same dacent column of smoke rowling from the chimbley.

"'Well,' thought he, 'I'll just stale over to the door-cheek, and peep in to get one sight of my poor mother; then I'll throw her in a handful of these guineas, and take to my scrapers.'

"Accordingly, he stole up at a half-bend to the door, and was just

[1] My soul's within you.

going to take a peep in, when out comes the little dog, Trig, and begins to leap and fawn upon him, as if it would eat him. The mother, too, came running out to see what was the matter, when the dog made another spring up about Jack's neck, and gave his lips the slightest lick in the world with its tongue, the crathur was so glad to see him : the next minute, Jack forgot the lady as *clane* as if he had never seen her ; but, if he forgot her, catch him at forgetting the money—not he, *avick!*—that stuck to him like pitch

" When the mother saw who it was, she flew to him, and, clasping her arms about his neck, hugged him till she wasn't worth three halfpence. After Jack *sot* a while, he made a trial to let her know what had happened him, but he *disremembered* it all, except having the money in the rock, so he up and tould her that, and a glad woman she was to hear of his good fortune. Still, he kept the place where the goold was to himself, having been often forbid by her ever to trust a woman with a sacret when he could avoid it.

" Now everybody knows what changes the money makes, and Jack was no exception to this ould saying. In a few years he had built himself a fine castle, with three hundred and sixty-four *windies* in it, and he would have added another, to make one for every day in the year, only that that would be equal to the number in the King's palace, and the Lord of the Black Rod would be sent to take his head off, it being high *thrason* for a subject to have as many windies in his house as the King. However, Jack, at any rate, had enough of them ; and he that couldn't be happy with three hundred and sixty-four, wouldn't desarve to have three hundred and sixty-five. Along with all this, he bought coaches and carriages, and didn't get proud, like many other beggarly upstarts, but took especial good care of his mother, whom he dressed in silks and satins, and gave her nice nourishing food, that was fit for an ould woman in her condition. He also got great teachers, men of deep larning, from Dublin, acquainted with all subjects ; and as his own abilities were bright, he soon became a very great scholar entirely, and was able, in the long run, to outdo all his tutherers.

" In this way he lived for some years—was now a man of great larning himself—could spoke the seven *langidges*, and it would delight your ears to hear how high-flown and Englified he could talk. All the world wondered where he got his wealth ; but, as he was kind and charitable to everyone that stood in need of assistance, the people said that, wherever he got it, it couldn't be in better hands. At last he began to look about him for a wife, and the only one in that part of the country that would be at all fit for him, was the Honourable Miss Bandbox, the daughter of a nobleman in the neighbourhood. She, indeed, flogged all the world for beauty ; but it was said that she was proud and fond of wealth, though, God he knows, she had enough of that, anyhow. Jack, however, saw none of this ; for she was cunning enough to smile, and simper, and look pleasant, whenever he'd come to her father's. Well, begad, from one thing and one word to another, Jack thought it was best to make up to her at *wanst*, and try if she'd accept of him for a husband ; accordingly he put the word to her, like

a man, and she, making as if she was blushing, put her fan before her face and made no answer. Jack, however, wasn't to be daunted; for he knew two things worth knowing, when a man goes to look for a wife: the first is—that 'faint heart never won fair lady,' and the second—that 'silence gives consint;' he, therefore, spoke up to her in fine English, for it's he that knew how to speak now, and, after a little more fanning and blushing, by jingo, she consinted. Jack then broke the matter to her father, who was as fond of money as the daughter, and only wanted to grab at him for the wealth.

"When the match was a-making, says ould Bandbox to Jack, 'Mr. Magennis,' says he (for nobody called him Jack now but his mother), 'these two things you must comply with, if you marry my daughter, Miss Gripsy:—you must send away your mother from about you, and pull down the cabin in which you and she used to live; Gripsy says that they would jog her memory consarning your low birth and former poverty. She's nervous and high-spirited, Mr. Magennis, and declares upon her honour that she couldn't bear the thoughts of having the delicacy of her feeling offinded by these things.'

"'Good morning to you both,' says Jack, like an honest fellow as he was. 'If she doesn't marry me except on these conditions, give her my compliments, and tell her our courtship is at an end.'

"But it wasn't long till they soon came out with another story, for before a week passed, they were very glad to get him on his own conditions. Jack was now as happy as the day was long—all things appointed for the wedding, and nothing a-wanting to make everything to his heart's content but the wife, and her he was to have in less than no time. For a day or two before the wedding there never was seen such grand preparations: bullocks, and hogs, and sheep were roasted whole -kegs of whisky, both Roscrea and Innishowen, barrels of ale and beer, were there in dozens. All descriptions of niceties, and wild-fowl, and fish from the *say*, and the dearest wine that could be bought with money, was got for the gentry and grand folks. Fiddlers, and pipers, and harpers, in short, all kinds of music and musicianers, played in shoals. Lords and ladies and squares of high degree were present—and, to crown the thing, there was open house for all comers.

"At length the wedding-day arrived; there was nothing but roasting and boiling; servants dressed in rich liveries ran about with joy and delight in their countenances, and white gloves and wedding favours on their hats and hands. To make a long story short, they were all seated in Jack's castle at the wedding breakfast, ready for the priest to marry them when they'd be done; for in them times people were never married until they had laid in a good foundation to carry them through the ceremony. Well, they were all seated round the table, the men dressed in the best of broadcloth, and the ladies rustling in their silks and satins—their heads, necks, and arms hung round with jewels both rich and rare: but of all that were there that day, there wasn't the likes of the bride and bridegroom. As for him, nobody could think, at all at all, that he was ever anything else than a born

gintleman; and what was more to his credit, he had his kind *ould* mother sitting beside the bride, to tache her that an honest person, though poorly born, is company for the king. As soon as the breakfast was served up, they all set to, and maybe the *vaarious* kinds of eatables did not pay for it; and amongst all this cutting and thrusting, no doubt but it was remarked that the bride herself was behindhand *wid* none of them—that she took her *dalin-trick* without flinching, and made nothing less than a right fog meal of it; and small blame to her for that same, you persave.

"When the breakfast was over, up gets Father Flanagan, out with his book, and on with his stole, to marry them. The bride and bridegroom went up to the end of the room, attended by their friends, and the rest of the company stood on each side of it, for you see they were too high bred, and knew their manners too well, to stand in a crowd like spalpeens. For all that, there was many a sly look from the ladies to their bachelors, and many a titter among them, grand as they were; for, to tell the truth, the best of them likes to see fun in the way, particularly of that sort. The priest himself was in as great a glee as any of them, only he kept it under, and well he might, for sure enough this marriage was nothing less than a rale windfall to him, and the parson that was to marry them after him—bekase you persave a Protestant and Catholic must be married by both, otherwise it doesn't hould good in law. The parson was as grave as a mustard-pot, and Father Flanagan called the bride and bridegroom his childher, which was a big bounce for him to say the likes of, more betoken that neither of them was a drop's blood to him.

"However, he pulled out the book, and was just beginning to buckle them, when in comes Jack's ould acquaintance, the smoking cur, as grave as ever. The priest had just got through two or three words of Latin, when the dog gives him a pluck by the sleeve; Father Flanagan, of coorse, turned round to see who it was that *nudged* him: 'behave yourself,' says the dog to him, just as he peeped over his shoulder—'behave yourself,' says he; and with that he sot him down on *his hunkers* beside the priest, and pulling a cigar, instead of a pipe, out of his pocket, he put it in his mouth, and began to smoke for the bare life of him. And, by my own word, it's he that could smoke: at times he would shoot the smoke in a slender stream, like a knitting-needle, with a round curl at the one end of it, ever so far out of the *right* side of his mouth; then he would shoot it out of the *left*, and sometimes make it swirl out so beautiful from the middle of his lips!—why, then, it's he that must have been the well-bred puppy all out, as far as smoking went. Father Flanagan and they all were tundher-struck.

"'In the name of St. Anthony, and of that holy nun, St. Teresa,' said his reverence to him, 'who or what are you, at all at all?'

"'Never mind that,' says the dog, taking the cigar for a minute between his claws; 'but if you wish particularly to know, I'm a thirty-second cousin of your own, by the mother's side.'

"'I command you, in the name of all the saints,' says Father

Flanagan, 'to disappear from among us, and never become visible to anyone in this house again.'

"'The sorra a budge, at the present time, will I budge,' says the dog to him, 'until I see all sides rightified, and the rogues disappointed.'

"Now one would be apt to think the appearance of a *spaking* dog might be after fright'ning the ladies; but doesn't all the world know that *spaking* puppies are their greatest favourites. Instead of that, you see, there was half a dozen of fierce-looking whiskered fellows, and three or four half-pay officers, that were nearer making off than the ladies. But, besides the cigar, the dog had, upon this occasion, a pair of green spectacles across his face, and through these, while he was *spaking* to Father Flanagan, he ogled all the ladies, one after another, and when his eye would light upon any that pleased him, he would kiss his paw to her, and wag his tail with the greatest politeness.

"'John,' says Father Flanagan, to one of the servants, 'bring me salt and water, till I consecrate them to banish the divil, for he has appeared to us all during broad daylight, in the shape of a dog.'

"'You had better behave yourself, I say again,' says the dog, 'or if you make me speak, by my honour as a gintleman, I'll expose you. I say, you won't marry the same two, neither this nor any other day, and I'll give you my rasons presently; but I *repate* it, Father Flanagan, if you compel me to speak. I'll make you look nine ways at once.'

"'I defy you, Satan,' says the priest, 'and if you don't take yourself away before the holy wather's made, I'll send you off in a flame of fire.'

"'Yes, I'm trimbling,' says the dog: 'plenty of *spirits* you laid in your day, but it was in a place that's nearer us than the Red Sea, you did it: listen to me though, for I don't wish to expose you, as I said.' So he gets on his hind legs, put his nose to the priest's ear, and whispers something to him that none of the rest could hear—all before the priest had time to know where he was. At any rate, whatever he said seemed to make his reverence look *double*, though, faix, that wasn't hard to do, for he was as big as *two* common men. When the dog was done speaking, and had put his cigar in his mouth, the priest seemed tundherstruck, crossed himself, and was, no doubt of it, in great perplexity.

"'I say it's false,' says Father Flanagan, plucking up courage; 'but you know you're a liar, and the father of liars.'

"'As thrue as gospel, this bout, I tell you,' says the dog.

"'Wait till I make my holy wather,' says the priest, 'and if I don't cork you in a thumb bottle for this, I'm not here.'

"'You're better at uncorking,' says the dog—'better at *relasing* spirits than confining them.'

"'Just at this minute the whole company sees a gintleman galloping for the bare life of him up to the hall-door, and he dressed like an officer. In three jiffeys he was down off his horse, and in among the company. The dog, as soon as he made his appearance, laid his claw

as usual on his nose, and gave the bridegroom a wink, as much as to say, 'Watch what'll happen.'

"Now it was very odd that Jack, during all this time, remembered the dog very well, but could never once think of the darling that did so much for him. As soon, however, as the officer made his appearance, the bride seemed as if she would sink outright; and when he walked up to her, to ax what was the meaning of what he saw, why down she drops at once—fainted clane. The gintleman then went up to Jack, and says, 'Sir, was this lady about to be married to you?'

"'Sartinly,' says Jack, 'we were going to be yoked in the blessed and holy tackle of mathrimony,' or some high-flown words of that kind.

"'Well, sir,' says the other back to him, 'I can only say that she is most solemnly sworn never to marry another man but me. That oath she *tuck* when I was joining my regiment before it went abroad; and if the ceremony of your marriage be performed, you will sleep with a perjured bride.'

"Begad, he did, plump before all their faces. Jack, of coorse, was struck all of a hape at this; but as he had the bride in his arms, giving her a little sup of whisky to bring her to, *you persave*, he couldn't make him an answer. However, she soon came to herself, and, on opening her eyes, 'Oh! hide me, hide me!' says she, 'for I can't bear to look on him!'

"'He says you are his sworn bride, my darling,' says Jack.

"'I am—I am,' says she, covering her eyes, and crying away at the rate of a wedding. 'I can't deny it; and, by tare-an-ounty!' says she, 'I'm unworthy to be either his wife or yours; for, except I marry you both, I dunna how to settle this affair between you, at all;—oh, murther sheery! but I'm the misfortunate crathur, entirely.

"'Well,' says Jack to the officer, 'nobody can do more than be sorry for a wrong turn; small blame to her for taking a fancy to your humble servant, Mr. Officer'—and he stood as tall as possible, to show himself off. 'You see the fair lady is sorrowful for her folly, so as it's not yet too late, and as you came in the nick of time, in the name of Providence take my place, and let the marriage go an.'

"'No,' says she, 'never; I'm not worthy of him, at all at all: tundher-an-age, but I'mthe unlucky thief!'

"While this was going forward, the officer looked closely at Jack, and seeing him such a fine, handsome fellow, and having heard before of his riches, he began to think that, all things considhered, she wasn't so much to be *blempt*. Then, when he saw how sorry she was for having forgot him, he steps *forrid*.

"'Well, says he, 'I'm still willing to marry you, particularly as you feel *conthrition*——'"

"He should have said contrition, confession, and satisfaction," observed Father Peter.

"Pether, will you keep your theology to yourself?" replied Father Ned, "and let us come to the plot without interruption."

"Plot!" exclaimed Father Peter, "I'm sure it's no rebellion, that there should be a plot in it, any way!"

"*Tace*," said Father Ned—"*tace*, and that's Latin for a candle."

"I deny that," said the curate; "*tace* is the imperative mood from *taceo*, to keep silent. *Taceo, taces, tacui, tacere, tacendi, tacendo, tac*——"

"Ned, go on with your story, and never mind that deep larning of his—he's almost cracked with it," said the superior: "go on, and never mind him."

"'Well,' says he, 'I'm still willing to marry you, particularly as you feel *conthrition* for what you were going to do. So, with this, they all *gother* about her, and, as the officer was a fine fellow himself, prevailed upon her to let the marriage be performed, and they were accordingly spliced as fast as his reverence could make them.

"'Now, Jack,' says the dog, 'I want to spake with you for a minute—it's a word for your own ear.' So he stands up on his two hind legs, and purtinded to be whisp'ring something to him; but what do you think?—he gives him the slightest touch on the lips with his paw, and that instant Jack remimbered the lady and everything that happened betune them.

"'Tell me this instant,' says Jack, seizing him by the throath, 'where's the darling, at all at all?'

"Jack spoke finer nor this, to be sure, but as I can't give his tall English, the sorra one of me will bother myself striving to do it.'

"Behave yourself, says the dog, 'just say nothing, only follow me.'

"Accordingly, Jack went out with the dog, and in a few minutes comes in again, *leading* along with him, *on the one side*, the loveliest lady that ever eye beheld, and the dog, that was her brother, now *metamurphied* into a beautiful, illegant gintleman, on the other.

"'Father Flanagan,' says Jack, 'you thought a while ago you'd have no marriage, but instead of that you'll have a brace of them;' up and telling the company, at the same time, all that happened him, and how the beautiful crathur that he brought in with him had done so much for him.

"Whin the gintlemen heard this, as they were all Irishmen, you may be sure there was nothing but huzzaing and throwing up of hats from them, and waving of handkerchers from the ladies. Well, my dear, the wedding dinner was ate in great style; the nobleman promised no disgrace to his rank at the trencher; and so, to make a long story short, such faisting and banqueteering was never seen since or before. At last night came; and, among ourselves, not a doubt of it, but Jack thought himself a happy man; and maybe if all was known, the bride was much of the same opinion: be that as it may, night came—the bride, all blushing, beautiful, and modest as your own sweetheart, was getting tired after the dancing; Jack, too, though much stouter, wished for a trifle of repose, and many thought it was near time to throw the stocking, as is proper, of coorse, on every occasion of the kind. Well, he was just on his way upstairs, and had

reached the first landing, when he hears a voice at his ear shouting, 'Jack, Jack—Jack Magennis!' Jack could have *spitted* anybody for coming to disturb him at such a criticality. 'Jack Magennis!' says the voice. Jack looked about to see who it was that called him, and there he found himself lying on the green *Rath*, a little above his mother's cabin, of a fine calm summer's evening in the month of June. His mother was stooping over him, with her mouth at his ear, striving to waken him by shouting and shaking him out of his sleep.

"'Oh! by this and by that, mother,' says Jack, 'what did you waken me for?'

"'Jack, avourneen,' says the mother, 'sure and you war lying grunting, and groaning, and snifthering there, for all the world as if you had the colic; and I only nudged you for fraid you war in pain.'

"'I wouldn't for a thousand guineas,' says Jack, 'that ever you wakened me, at all at all; but whisht, mother, go into the house, and I'll be afther you in less than no time.'

"The mother went in, and the first thing Jack did was to try the rock; and, sure enough, there he found as much money as made him the richest man that ever was in the country. And what was to his credit, when he did grow rich, he wouldn't let his cabin be thrown down, but built a fine castle on a spot near it, where he could always have it under his eye, to prevent him from getting proud. In the coorse of time, a harper, hearing the story, composed a tune upon it, which everybody knows is called the 'Little House under the Hill' to this day, beginning with—

'Hi for it, ho for it, hi for it still;
Och, and whoo! your sowl—hi for the little house under the hill!'

"So you see that was the way the great Magennises first came by heir wealth, and all because Jack was industrious, and an obadient, dutiful, tindher son to his helpless ould mother; and well he desarved what he got, *ershi misha*.[1] Your healths — Father Ned — Father Pether—all kinds of happiness to us; and there's my story."

"Well," said Father Peter, "I think that dog was nothing more or less than a downright cur, that deserved the lash nine times a day, if it was only for his want of respect to the clergy; if he had given me such insolence, I solemnly declare I would have bate the devil out of him with a hazel cudgel, if I failed to exorcise him with a prayer."

Father Ned looked at the simple and credulous curate with an expression of humour and astonishment.

"Paddy," said he to the servant, "will you let us know what the night's doing?"

Paddy looked out. "Why, your rev'rence, it's a fine night, all out, and cleared up it is bravely."

At this moment the stranger awoke. "Sir," said Father Ned, "you missed an amusing story in consequence of your somnolency."

[1] Say I.

"Though I missed the story," replied the stranger, "I was happy enough to hear your friend's critique upon the dog."

Father Ned seemed embarrassed; the curate, on the contrary, exclaimed with triumph, "But wasn't *I* right, sir?"

"Perfectly," said the stranger; "the moral you applied was excellent."

"Good night, boys," said Father Ned—"good night, Mr. Longinus Polysyllabus Alexandrinus!"

"Good night, boys," said Father Peter, imitating Father Ned, whom he looked upon as a perfect model of courtesy—"good night, boys; good night, Mr. Longinus Polysyllabus Alexandrinus!"

"Good night," replied the stranger; "good night, Doctor Ned—hem!—Doctor *Edward* Delcery; and good night, Doctor Peter M'Clatchaghan—good night!"

When the clergymen were gone, the circle about the fire, excepting the members of Ned's family and the stranger, dispersed to their respective homes; and thus ended the amusement of that evening.

After they had separated, Ned, whose curiosity respecting the stranger was by no means satisfied, began to sift him in his own peculiar manner, as they both sat at the fire.

"Well, sir," said Ned, "barring the long playacther that tumbles upon the big stage in the street of our market-town here below, I haven't seen so long a man this many a day; and, barring your big whiskers, the sorra one of your honour's unlike him. A fine portly vagabone he is, indeed—a big man, and a bigger rogue, they say, for he pays nobody."

"Have you got such a company in your neighbourhood?" inquired the stranger, with indifference.

"We have, sir," said Ned; "but, plase goodness, they'll soon be lashed like hounds from the place—the town boys are preparing to give them a chivey some fine morning out of the country."

"Indeed!—he—hem!—that will be very spirited of the town boys," said the stranger, dryly.

"That's a smart-looking horse your honour rides," observed Ned; "did he carry you far to-day, with submission?"

"Not far," replied his companion—"only fourteen miles; but, I suppose, the fact is, you wish to know who and what I am, where I came from, and whither I am going. Well, you shall know this. In the first place, I am agent to Lord Non-Resident's estate, if you ever heard of that nobleman, and I am on my way from Castle Ruin, the seat of his lordship's incumbrances, to Dublin. My name you have already heard. Are you now satisfied?"

"Parfitly, your honour," replied Ned, "and I'm much obliged to you, sir."

"I trust you are an honest man," said the stranger; "because, for this night, I am about to place great confidence in you."

"Well, sir," said his landlord, "if I turn out dishonest to you, it's more nor I did in my whole life to anybody else, barring to Nancy."

"Here, then," said the stranger, drawing out a large packet,

enclosed in a roll of black leather, "here is the half-year's rent of the estate, together with my own property; keep it secure till morning, when I shall demand it, and, of course, it will be safe?"

"As if it was five *fadom* under ground," replied Ned. "I will put it along with our own trifle of silver; and after that, let Nancy alone for keeping it *safe* so long as it's *there!*" saying which, Ned secured the packet, and showed the stranger his bed.

About five o'clock the next morning their guest was up, and ordered a snack in all haste. "Being a military man," said he, "and accustomed to timely hours, I shall ride down to the town, and put a letter into the post office in time for the Dublin mail, after which you may expect me to breakfast. But, in the meantime, I am not to go with empty pockets," he added, when mounting his horse at the door. Bring me silver, landlord, and be quick."

"How, much, plase your honour?"

"Twenty or thirty shillings; but, harkee, produce my packet, that I may be certain my property is safe."

"Here it is, your honour, safe and sound," replied Ned; "and Nancy, sir, has sent you all the silver she has, which was one pound five; but I'd take it as a favour if your honour would be contint with twenty shillings, and lave me the other five; for you see the case is this, sir, plase your honour, *she*"—and Ned, with a shrewd, humorous nod, pointed with his thumb over his shoulder as he spoke—"she wears the——what you know, sir."

"Ay, I thought so," replied the stranger; "but a man of your size, to be hen-pecked, must be a great knave, otherwise your wife would allow you more liberty. Go in, man; you deserve no compassion in such an age of freedom as this. I shan't give you a farthing till after my return, and only then if it be agreeable to your wife."

"Murdher!" said Ned, astonished. "I beg your honour's pardon; murdher alive, sir, where's your whiskers?"

The stranger put his hand hastily to his face, and smiled. "Where are my whiskers? Why, shaved off, to be sure," he replied; and setting spurs to his horse, was soon out of sight and hearing.

It was nearly a month after that, when Ned and Nancy, in presence of Father Deleery, opened the packet, and discovered, not the half year's rent of Lord Non-Resident's estate, but a large sheaf of play-bills packed up together—their guest having been the identical person to whom Ned affirmed he bore so strong a resemblance.

SHANE FADH'S WEDDING.

ON the following evening, the neighbours were soon assembled about Ned's hearth, in the same manner as on the night preceding.

And we may observe, by the way, that although there was a due admixture of opposite creeds and conflicting principles, yet even then, and the time is not so far back, such was their cordiality of heart and simplicity of manners, when contrasted with the bitter and rancorous spirit of the present day, that the very remembrance of the harmony in which they lived is at once pleasing and melancholy.

After some preliminary chat—"Well, Shane," said Andy Morrow, addressing Shane Fadh, "will you give us an account of your wedding? I'm told it was the greatest let-out that ever was in this country, before or since."

"And you may say that, Mr. Morrow," said Shane. "I was at many a wedding myself, but never at the likes of my own, barring Tim Lanigan's, that married Father Corrigan's niece."

"I believe," said Andy, "that, too, was a dashing one; however, it's your own we want. Come, Nancy, fill these measures again, and let us be comfortable, at all events, and give Shane a double one, for talking's druthy work.—I'll pay for this round."

When the liquor was got in, Shane, after taking a draught, laid down his pint, pulled out his steel tobacco box, and, after twisting off a chew between his teeth, closed the box, and commenced the story of his wedding.

"When I was a Brine-Oge,"[1] said Shane, "I was as wild as an unbroken cowlt—no divilment was too hard for me; and so signs on it, for there wasn't a piece of mischief done in the parish, but was laid at my door—and the dear knows I had enough of my own to answer for, let alone to be set down for that of other people; but, any way, there was many a thing done in my name, when I knew neither act norpart about it. One of them I'll mintion: Dick Cuille nan, father to Paddy, that lives at the crass-roads, beyant Gunpowdher Lodge, was over head and ears in love with Jemmy Finigan's eldest daughter, Mary, then, sure enough, as purty a girl as you'd meet in a fair—indeed, I think I'm looking at her, with her fair flaxen ringlets hanging over her shoulders, as she used to pass our house, going to mass of a Sunday. God rest her sowl, she's now in glory—that was before she was my wife. Many a happy day we passed together; and I could take it to my death, that an ill word, let alone to rise our hands to one another, never passed between us—only one day, that a word or two happened about the dinner, in the middle of Lent, being a little too late, so that the horses were kept nigh hand half an hour out of the plough;

[1] A young man full of fun and frolic.

and I wouldn't have valued that so much, only that it was *Bealcam*[1] Doherty that joined me in ploughing that year—and I was vexed not to take all I could out of him, for he was a raal Turk himself.

"I disremimber now what passed between us as to words, but I know I had a duck-egg in my hand, and when she spoke, I raised my arm, and nailed—poor Larry Tracy, our servant boy, between the two eyes with it, although the crathur was ating his dinner quietly forenent me, not saying a word.

"Well, as I tould you, Dick was ever after her, although her father and mother would rather see her *under boord* than joined to any of that connection; and as for herself, she couldn't bear the sight of him, he was sich an upsetting, conceited puppy, that thought himself too good for every girl. At any rate, he tried often and often, in fair and market, to get striking up with her; and both coming from and going to mass 'twas the same way, for ever after and about her, till the state he was in spread over the parish like wildfire. Still, all he could do was of no use; except to bid him the time of day, she never entered into discoorse with him at all at all. But there was no putting the likes of him off; so he got a quart of spirits in his pocket one night, and without saying a word to mortal, off he sets, full speed, to her father's, in order to brake the thing to the family.

"Mary might be about seventeen at this time, and her mother looked almost as young and fresh as if she hadn't been married at all. When Dick came in, you may be sure they were all surprised at the sight of him; but they were civil people, and the mother wiped a chair, and put it over near the fire for him to sit down upon, waiting to hear what he'd say, or what he wanted, although they could give a purty good guess as to that, but they only wished to put him off with as little offince as possible. When Dick *sot* awhile, talking about what the price of hay and oats would be in the following summer, and other subjects that he thought would show his knowledge of farming and cattle, he pulls out his bottle, encouraged to it by their civil way of talking, and telling the ould couple that as he came over on his *kailyee*[2] he had brought a drop in his pocket to sweeten the discoorse, axing Susy Finigan, the mother, for a glass to send it round with, at the same time drawing over his chair close to Mary, who was knitting her stocken up beside her little brother Michael, and chatting to the gorsoon, for fraid that Cuillenan might think she paid *him* any attention. When Dick got alongside of her, he began, of coorse, to pull out her needles and spoil her knitting, as is customary before the young people come to close spaking. Mary, howsomever, had no welcome for him; so says she, 'You ought to know, Dick Cuillenan, who you spake to, before you make the freedom you do.'

"'But you don't know,' says Dick, 'that I am a great hand at spoiling the girls' knitting; it's a fashion I've got,' says he.

"'It's a fashion, then,' says Mary, 'that'll be apt to get you a broken

[1] Crooked mouth. [2] Kailyee—a friendly evening visit.

mouth sometime.[1] 'Then,' says Dick, 'whoever does that must marry me.'

"'And them that gets you will have a prize to brag of,' says she. 'Stop yourself, Cuillenan; single your freedom and double your distance, if you plase; I'll cut my coat off no such cloth.'

"'Well, Mary,' says he, 'maybe, if *you* don't, as good will; but you won't be so cruel as all that comes to; the worst side of you is out, I think.'

"He was now beginning to make greater freedom, but Mary rises from her seat, and whisks away with herself, her cheek as red as a rose with vexation at the fellow's imperance. 'Very well,' says Dick, 'off you go; but there's as good fish in the *say* as ever was catched. I'm sorry to see, Susy,' says he to her mother, 'that Mary's no friend of mine, and I'd be mighty glad to find it otherwise; for, to tell the truth, I'd wish to become connected with the family. In the mane time, hadn't you better get us a glass, till we drink one bottle on the head of it, any way.'

"'Why, then, Dick Cuillenan,' says the mother, 'I don't wish you anything else than good luck and happiness; but, as to Mary, she's not *for* you herself, nor would it be a good match between the families at all. Mary is to have her grandfather's sixty guineas, and the two *moulleens*[2] that her uncle Jack left her four years ago has brought her a good stock for any farm. Now, if she married you, Dick, where's the farm to bring her too?—surely, it's not upon them seven acres of stone and bent, upon the long Esker, that I'd let my daughter go to live. So, Dick, put up your bottle, and in the name of God, go home, boy, and mind your business; but, above all, when you want a wife, go to them that you may have a right to expect, and not to a girl like Mary Finigan, that could lay down guineas where you could hardly find shillings.'

"'Very well, Susy,' says Dick, nettled enough, as he well might, 'I say to you, just as I say to your daughter, if you be proud there's no force.'"

"But what has this to do with you, Shane?" asked Andy Morrow. "Sure we wanted to hear an account of *your* wedding, but instead of that, it's Dick Cuillenan's history you're giving us."

"That's just it," said Shane; "sure, only for this same Dick, I'd never get Mary Finigan for a wife. Dick took Susy's advice, bekase, after all, the undacent drop was in him, or he'd never have brought the bottle out of the house at all; but, faith, he riz up, put the whisky in his pocket, and went home with a face on him as black as my hat with venom. Well, things passed on till the Christmas following,

[1] It is no unusual thing in Ireland for a country girl to repulse a fellow whom she thinks beneath her, if not by a flat at least by a flattening refusal; nor is it seldom that the "argumentum fistycuffium" is resorted to on such occasions. I have more than once seen a disagreeable lover receive, from the fair hand which he sought, so masterly a blow, that a bleeding nose rewarded his ambition, and silenced for a time his importunity.

[2] Cows without horns.

when one night, after the Finigans had all gone to bed, there comes a crowd of fellows to the door, thumping at it with great violence, and swearing that if the people within wouldn't open it immediately, it would be smashed into smithereens. The family, of coorse, were all alarmed; but somehow or other, Susy herself got suspicious that it might be something about Mary; so up she gets, and sends the daughter to her own bed, and lies down herself in the daughter's.

"In the mane time, Finigan got up, and after lighting a candle, opened the door at once. 'Come, Finigan,' says a strange voice, 'put out the candle, except you wish to make a candlestick of the thatch,' says he—'or to give you a prod of a bagnet under the ribs,' says he.

"It was a folly for one man to go to bell-the-cat with a whole crowd; so he blew the candle out, and next minute they rushed in, and went as straight as a rule to Mary's bed. The mother all the time lay close, and never said a word. At any rate, what could be expected, only that, do what she could, at the long run she must go. So, accordingly, after a very hard battle on her side, being a powerful woman, she was obliged to travel—but not till she had left many of them marks to remimber her by; among the rest, Dick himself got his nose split on his face, with the stroke of a churn-staff, so that he carried half a nose on each cheek till the day of his death. Still, there was very little spoke, for they didn't wish to betray themselves on any side. The only thing that Finigan could hear, was my name repated several times, as if the whole thing was going on under my direction: for Dick thought, that if there was any one in the parish likely to be set down for it, it was me.

"When Susy found they were for putting her behind one of them on a horse, she rebelled again, and it took near a dozen of boys to hoist her up; but one vagabone of them, that had a rusty broad-sword in his hand, gave her a skelp with the flat side of it that subdued her at once, and off they went. Now, above all nights in the year, who should be dead but my own full cousin, Denis Fadh—God be good to him!—and I, and Jack and Dan, his brothers, while bringing home whisky for the wake and berrin, met them on the road. At first we thought them distant relations coming to the wake, but when I saw only one woman among the set, and she mounted on a horse, I began to suspect that all wasn't right. I accordingly turned back a bit, and walked near enough without their seeing me to hear the discoorse, and discover the whole business. In less than no time I was back at the wake-house, so I up and tould them what I saw, and off we set, about forty of us, with good cudgels, scythe-sneds, and hooks, fully bent to bring her back from them, come or go what would. And troth, sure enough, we did it; and I was the man myself that rode after the mother on the same horse that carried her off.

"From this out, when and wherever I got an opportunity, I whispered the soft nonsense, Nancy, into poor Mary's ear, until I put

my *comedher*[1] on her, and she couldn't live at all without me. But I was something for a woman to look at then, anyhow, standing six feet two in my stocking soles, which, you know, made them call me Shane *Fadh*.[2] At that time I had a dacent farm of fourteen acres in Crocknagooran—the same that my son Ned has at the present time; and though, as to wealth, by no manner of manes fit to compare with the Finigans, yet, upon the whole, she might have made a worse match. The father, however, wasn't for me; but the mother was: so after drinking a bottle or two with the mother, Sarah Traynor, her cousin, and Mary, along with Jack Donnellan on my part, in their own barn, unknownst to the father, we agreed to make a runaway match of it; appointed my uncle, Brian Slevin's, as the house we'd go to. The next Sunday was the day appointed; so I had my uncle's family prepared, and sent two gallons of whisky, to be there before us, knowing that neither the Finigans nor my own friends liked stinginess.

"Well, well, after all, the world is a strange thing—if myself hardly knows what to make of it. It's I that did dote night and day upon that girl; and indeed there was them that could have seen me in Jimmaiky for her sake, for she was the beauty of the county, not to say of the parish, for a girl in her station. For my part I could neither ate nor sleep, for thinking that she was so soon to be my own married wife, and to live under my roof. And when I'd think of it, how my heart would bounce to my throat with downright joy and delight. The mother had made us promise not to meet till Sunday, for fraid of the father becoming suspicious: but, if I was to be shot for it, I couldn't hinder myself from going every night to the great flowering whitethorn that was behind their garden; and although she knew I hadn't promised to come, yet there she still was; something, she said, tould her I *would* come.

"The next Sunday we met at *Althadhawan* wood, and I'll never forget what I felt when I was going to the green at St. Patrick's Chair, where the boys and girls met on Sunday: but there she was—the bright eyes dancing with joy in her head to see me. We spent the evening in the wood till it was dusk—I bating them all leaping, dancing, and throwing the stone; for, by my song, I thought I had the action of ten men in me; she looking on, and smiling like an angel, when I'd lave them miles behind me. As it grew dusk they all went home, except herself, and me, and a few more, who, maybe, had something of the same kind on hands.

"'Well, Mary,' says I, 'acushla machree, it's dark enough for us to go; and in the name of God let us be off.' The crathur looked into my face, and got pale—for she was very young then. 'Shane,' says she, and she thrimbled like an aspen lafe, 'I'm going to trust myself with you for ever—for ever, Shane, avourneen'—and her sweet voice broke into purty murmurs as she spoke; 'whether for happiness

[1] Comedher—come hither—alluding to the burden of an old love charm which is still used by the young of both sexes on May morning. It is a literal translation of the Irish word "gutsho."

[2] Fadh is tall or long.

or sorrow, God he only knows. I can bear poverty and distress, sickness and want, with you, but I can't bear to think that you should ever forget to love me as you do now ; or that your heart should ever cool to me : but I'm sure,' says she, ' you'll never forget this night, and the solemn promises you made me, before God and the blessed skies above us.'

" We were sitting at the time under the shade of a rowan-tree, and I had only one answer to make—I pulled her to my breast, where she laid her head and cried like a child, with her cheek against mine. My own eyes wern't dry, although I felt no sorrow but—but—I never forgot that night—and I never will."

He now paused a few minutes, being too much affected to proceed.

" Poor Shane," said Nancy in a whisper to Andy Morrow, " night and day he's thinking about that woman ; she's now dead going on a year, and you would think by him, although he bears up very well before company, that she died only yestherday—but indeed it's he that was always the kind-hearted, affectionate man ; and a better husband never broke bread."

" Well," said Shane, resuming the story, and clearing his voice, " it's a great consolation to me, now that she's gone, to think that I never broke the promise I made her that night ; for as I tould you, except in regard of the duck-egg, a bitther word never passed between us. I was in a passion then, for a wonder, and bent on showing her that I was a dangerous man to provoke ; so just to give her a *spice* of what I could do, I made *Larry* feel it—and may God forgive me for raising my hand even then to her. But sure he would be a brute that would beat such a woman except by proxy. When it was clear dark we set off, and after crossing the country for two miles, reached my uncle's, where a great many of my friends were expecting us. As soon as we came to the door I struck it two or three times, for that was the sign, and my aunt came out, and taking Mary in her arms, kissed her, and, with a thousand welcomes, brought us both in.

" You all know that the best of aiting and dhrinking is provided when a runaway couple is expected ; and indeed there was *galore*[1] of both there. My uncle and all that were within welcomed us again ; and many a good song and hearty jug of punch was sent round that night. The next morning my uncle went to her father's, and broke the business to him at once : indeed, it wasn't very hard to do, for I believe it reached him before he saw my uncle at all ; so she was brought home that day, and, on the Thursday night after, I, my father, uncle, and several other friends, went there, and made the match. She had sixty guineas that her grandfather left her, thirteen head of cattle, two feather and two chaff beds, with sheeting, quilts, and blankets ; three pieces of bleached linen, and a flock of geese of her own rearing —upon the whole, among ourselves, it wasn't aisy to get such a fortune.

" Well, the match was made, and the wedding-day appointed ; but

[1] Galore—more than enough—great abundance.

there was one thing still to be managed, and that was how to get over the *standing* at mass on Sunday, to make satisfaction for the scandal we gave the church by running away with one another—but that's all stuff, for who cares a pin about standing, when three halves of the parish are married in the same way. The only thing that vexed me was that it would keep back the wedding-day. However, her father and my uncle went to the priest, and spoke to him, trying, of coorse, to get us off of it, but he knew we were fat geese, and was in for giving us a plucking.—Hut, tut!—he wouldn't hear of it at all, not he; for although he would ride fifty miles to sarve either of us, he couldn't brake the new orders that he had got only a few days before that from the bishop. No; we must *stand*—for it would be setting a bad example to the parish; and if he would let *us* pass, how could he punish the rest of his flock, when they'd be guilty of the same thing.

"'Well, well, your reverence,' says my uncle, winking at her father, 'if that's the case it can't be helped anyhow—they must only stand, as many a dacent father and mother's child has done before them, and will again, plase God—your reverence is right in doing your duty.'

"'True for you, Brian,' says his reverence, 'and yet, God knows, there's no man in the parish would be sorrier to see such a dacent, comely, young couple put upon a level with all the scrubs of the parish; and I know, Jemmy Finigan, it would go hard with your young, bashful daughter to get through with it, having the eyes of the whole congregation staring on her.'

"'Why then, your reverence, as to that,' says my uncle, who was just as stiff as the other was stout, 'the bashfulest of them will do more nor that to get a husband.'

"'But you tell me,' says the priest, 'that the wedding-day is fixed upon; how will you manage there?'

"'Why, put it off for three Sundays longer, to be sure,' says the uncle.

"'But you forget this, Brian,' says the priest, 'that good luck or prosperity never attends the putting off of a wedding.'

"Now here you see is where the priest had them—for they knew that as well as his reverence himself—so they were in a puzzle again.

"'It's a disagreeable business,' says the priest; 'but the truth is I could get them off with the bishop only for one thing—I owe him five guineas of altar-money, and I'm so far back in dues that I'm not able to pay him. If I could enclose this to him in a letter, I would get them off at once, although it would be bringing myself into trouble with the parish afterwards; but, at all events,' says he, 'I wouldn't make every one of you both; so, to prove that I wish to sarve you, I'll sell the best cow in my byre, and pay him myself, rather than their wedding-day should be put off, poor things, or themselves brought to any bad luck—the Lord keep them from it!'

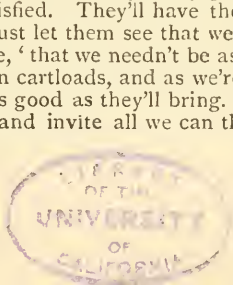
"While he was speaking, he stamped his foot two or three times on the flure, and the housekeeper came in. 'Katty,' says he, 'bring us

in a bottle of whisky; at all events, I can't let you away,' says he, 'without tasting something, and drinking luck to the young folks.'

"'In troth,' says Jemmy Finigan, 'and begging your reverence's pardon, the sorra cow you'll sell this bout, anyhow, on account of me or my childhre, bekase I'll lay down on the nail what'll clear you and the bishop; and in the name of goodness, as the day is fixed and all, let the crathurs not be disappointed.'

"'Jemmy,' says my uncle, 'if you go to that, you'll pay but your share, for I insist upon laying down one-half, at laste.'

"At any rate, they came down with the cash, and after drinking a bottle between them, went home in choice spirits entirely at their good luck in so aisily getting us off. When they had left the house a bit, the priest sent after them. 'Jemmy,' says he to Finigan, 'I forgot a circumstance, and that is to tell you that I will go and marry them at your own house, and bring Father James, my curate, with me.' 'Oh, wurrah! no,' said both, 'don't mention *that*, your reverence, except you wish to break their hearts, out and out! Why, that would be a thousand times worse nor making them stand to do penance. Doesn't your reverence know that if they hadn't the pleasure of *running for the bottle*, the whole wedding wouldn't be worth three-halfpence?' 'Indeed, I forgot that, Jemmy.' 'But sure,' says my uncle, 'your reverence and Father James must be at it, whether or not; for that we intended from the first.' 'Tell them I'll run for the bottle, too,' says the priest, laughing, 'and will make some of them look sharp, never fear.' Well, by my song, so far all was right; and maybe it's we that wern't glad—maning Mary and myself—that there was nothing more in the way to put off the wedding-day. So, as the bridegroom's share of the expense always is to provide the whisky, I'm sure, for the honour and glory of taking the blooming young crathur from the great lot of bachelors that were all breaking their hearts about her, I couldn't do less nor finish the thing dacently—knowing, besides, the high doings that the Finigans would have of it—for they were always looked upon as a family that never had their heart in a trifle when it would come to the push. So, you see, I and my brother Mickey, my cousin Tom, and Dom'nick Nulty, went up into the mountains to Tim Cassidy's still-house, where we spent a glorious day, and bought fifteen gallons of stuff, that one drop of it would bring the tear, if possible, to a young widdy's eye that had berrid a bad husband. Indeed, this was at my father's bidding, who wasn't a bit behindhand with any of them in cutting a dash. 'Shane,' says he to me, 'you know the Finigans of ould, that they won't be contint with what would do another, and that except they go beyant the thing, entirely, they won't be satisfied. They'll have the whole country-side at the wedding, and we must let them see that we have a spirit and a faction of our own,' says he, 'that we needn't be ashamed of. They've got all kinds of ateables in cartloads, and as we're to get the drinkables, we must see and give as good as they'll bring. I myself, and your mother, will go round and invite all we can think of,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and let you and Mickey go up the hills to Tim Cassidy, and get fifteen gallons of whisky, for I don't think less will do us.'

"This we accordingly complied with, as I said, and surely better stuff never went down the *red lane*[1] than the same whisky; for the people knew nothing about watering it then, at all at all. The next thing I did was to get a fine shop cloth coat, a pair of top boots, and buckskin breeches fit for a squire, along with a new Caroline hat that would throw off the wet like a duck. Mat Kavanagh, the schoolmaster from Findramore bridge, lent me his watch for the occasion, after my spending near two days learning from him to know what o'clock it was. At last, somehow, I masthered that point so well that in a quarter of an hour, at least, I could give a dacent guess at the time upon it.

"Well, at last the day came. The wedding morning, or the bride's part of it, as they say, was beautiful. It was then the month of July. The evening before, my father and my brother went over to Jemmy Finigan's, to make the regulations for the wedding. We, that is my party, were to be at the bride's house about ten o'clock, and we were then to proceed, all on horseback, to the priest's, to be married. We were then, after drinking something at Tom Hance's public house, to come back as far as the Dumbhill, where we were to start and run for the bottle. That morning we were all up at the skriek of day. From six o'clock, my own faction, friends and neighbours, began to come, all mounted; and about eight o'clock there was a whole regiment of them, some on horses, some on mules, others on raheries and asses; and, by my word, I believe little Dick Snudaghan, the tailor's apprentice, that had a hand in making my wedding clothes, was mounted upon a buck goat, with a bridle of selvages tied to his horns. Anything at all to keep their feet from the ground; for nobody would be allowed to go with the wedding that hadn't some animal between them and the earth.

"To make a long story short, so large a bridegroom's party was never seen in that country before, save and except Tim Lannigan's, that I mentioned just now. It would make you split your face laughing to see the figure they cut; some of them had saddles and bridles—others had saddles and halthers: some had back-suggawns of straw, with hay stirrups to them, but good bridles; others had sacks filled up as like saddles as they could make them, girthed with hay ropes five or six times tied round the horse's body. When one or two of the horses wouldn't carry double, except the hind rider sat strideways, the women had to be put foremost, and the men behind them. Some had dacent pillions enough, but most of them had none at all, and the women were obligated to sit where the crupper ought to be—and a hard card they had to play to keep their seats even when the horses walked asy, so what must it be when they came to a gallop; but that same was nothing at all to a trot.

"From the time they began to come that morning, you may be

[1] Humorous periphrasis for throat.

sartain that the glass was no cripple, anyhow—although, for fear of accidents, we took care not to go too deep. At eight o'clock we sat down to a rousing breakfast, for we thought it best to eat a trifle at home, lest they might think that what we were to get at the bride's breakfast might be thought any novelty. As for my part, I was in such a state that I couldn't let a morsel cross my throat, nor did I know what end of me was uppermost. After breakfast they all got their cattle, and I my hat and whip, and was ready to mount, when my uncle whispered to me that I must kneel down and ax my father and mother's blessing, and forgiveness for all my disobedience and offinces towards them—and also to requist the blessing of my brothers and sisters. Well, in a short time I was down; and, my goodness! such a hullaballoo of crying as was there in a minute's time! 'Oh, Shane Fadh—Shane Fadh, acushla machree!' says my poor mother in Irish, 'you're going to break up the ring about your father's hearth and mine—going to lave us, avourneen, for ever, and we to hear your light foot and sweet voice, morning, noon, and night, no more! Oh!' says she, 'it's you that was the good son all out; and the good brother. oo: kind and cheerful was your beautiful voice, and full of love and affection was your heart! Shane, avourneen deelish, if ever I was harsh to you, forgive your poor mother, that will never see you more on her flure as one of her own family.'

"Even my father, that wasn't much given to crying, couldn't speak, but went over to a corner and cried till the neighbours stopped him. As for my brothers and sisters, they were all in an uproar; and I myself cried like a Trojan, merely bekase I *see* them at it. My father and mother both kissed me, and gave me their blessing; and my brothers and sisters did the same, while you'd think all their hearts would break. 'Come, come,' says my uncle, 'I'll have none of this: what a hubbub you make, and your son going to be well married—going to be joined to a girl that your betters would be proud to get into connection with. You should have more sense, Rose Campbell—you ought to thank God that he had the luck to come acrass such a colleen for a wife; that it's not going to his grave, instead of into the arms of a purty girl—and what's better, a good girl. So quit your blubbering, Rose; and you, Jack,' says he to my father, 'that ought to have more sense, stop this instant. Clear off, every one of you, out of this, and let the young boy go to his horse.—Clear out, I say, or by the powers I'll—look at them three stags of hussies; by the hand of my body, they're blubbering bekase it's not their own story this blessed day. Move—bounce!—and you, Rose Oge, if you're not behind Dudley Fulton in less than no time, by the hole of my coat, I'll marry a wife myself, and then where will the twenty guineas be that I'm to lave you.' God rest his soul, and yet there was a tear in his eye all the while—even in spite of his joking!

"Anyhow, it's easy knowing that there wasn't sorrow at the bottom of their grief: for they were all now laughing at my uncle's jokes, even while their eyes were red with the tears: my mother herself couldn't but be in good humour, and join her smile with the rest.

"My uncle now drove us all out before him; not, however, till my mother had sprinkled a drop of holy water on each of us, and given me and my brother and sisters a small taste of blessed candle to prevent us from sudden death and accidents. My father and she didn't come with us then, but they went over to the bride's while we were all gone to the priest's house. At last we set off in great style and spirits—I well mounted on a good horse of my own, and my brother on one that he had borrowed from Peter Danellon, fully bet on winning the bottle. I would have borrowed him myself, but I thought it dacenter to ride my own horse manfully, even though he never won a side of mutton or a saddle, like Danellon's. But the man that was most likely to come in for the bottle was little Billy Cormick, the tailor, who rode a blood-racer that young John Little had wickedly lent him for the special purpose; he was a tall bay animal, with long small legs, a switch tail, and didn't know how to trot. Maybe we didn't cut a dash—and might have taken a town before us. Out we set about nine o'clock, and went acrass the country: but I'll not stop to mintion what happened to some of them, even before we got to the bride's house. It's enough to say here, that sometimes one in crassing a stile or ditch would drop into the *shough*;[1] sometimes another would find himself headforemost on the ground; a woman would be capsized here in crassing a ridgy field, bringing her fore-rider to the ground along with her; another would be hanging like a broken arch, ready to come down, till some one would ride up and fix her on the seat. But as all this happened in going over the fields, we expected that when we'd get out on the king's highway there would be less danger, as we would have no ditches or drains to crass. When we came in sight of the house, there was a general shout of welcome from the bride's party, who were on the watch for us: we couldn't do less nor give them back the chorus; but we had better have let that alone, for some of the young horses took the *stadh*,[2] others of them capered about; the asses—the sorra choke them—that were along with us should begin to bray, as if it was the king's birthday—and a mule of Jack Irwin's took it into his head to stand stock still. This brought another dozen of them to the ground; so that, between one thing or another, we were near half an hour before we got on the march again. When the blood horse that the tailor rode saw the crowd and heard the shouting, he cocked his ears, and set off with himself full speed; but before he had got far he was without a rider, and went galloping up to the bride's house, the bridle hangin' about his feet. Billy, however, having taken a glass or two, wasn't to be cowed; so he came up in great blood, and swore he would ride him to America, sooner than let the bottle be won from the bridegroom's party.

"When we arrived, there was nothing but shaking hands and kissing, and all kinds of *slewsthering*—men kissing men—women kissing women—and after that men and women all through other. Another

[1] Dyke or drain. [2] Became restive.

breakfast was ready for us ; and here we all sat down, myself and my next relations in the bride's house, and the others in the barn and garden ; for one house wouldn't hold the half of us. Eating, however, was all only talk of coorse we took some of the poteen again, and in a short time afterwards set off along the paved road to the priest's house to be tied as fast as he could make us, and that was fast enough. Before we went out to mount our horses, though, there was just such a hullaballoo with the bride and her friends as there was with myself: but my uncle soon put a stop to it, and in five minutes had them breaking their hearts laughing.

" Bless my heart, what doings !—what roasting and boiling !—and what tribes of beggars and shulers, and vagabonds of all sorts and sizes, were sunning themselves about the doors—wishing us a thousand times long life and happiness. There was a fiddler and piper : the piper was to stop in my father-in-law's while we were going to be married, to keep the neighbours that were met there shaking their toes while we were at the priest's, and the fiddler was to come with ourselves, in order, you know, to have a dance at the priest's house, and to play for us coming and going ; for there's nothing like a taste of music when one's *on* for sport. As we were setting off, ould Mary M'Quade from Kilnashogue, who was sent for bekase she understood charms, and had the name of being lucky, tuck myself aside. ' Shane Fadh,' says she, ' you're a young man well to look upon ; may God bless you and keep you so ; and there's not a doubt but there's them here that wishes you ill—that would rather be in your shoes this blessed day, with your young *colleen bawn*,[1] that'll be your wife before the sun sets, plase the heavens. There's ould Fanny Barton, the wrinkled thief of a hag, that the Finigans axed here for the sake of her decent son-in-law, who ran away with her daughter Betty, that was the great beauty some years ago : her breath's not good, Shane, and many a strange thing's said of her. Well, maybe I know more about that nor I'm going to mintion, anyhow : more betoken that it's not for nothing the white hare haunts the shrubbery behind her house.' ' But what harm could she do me, Sonsy Mary ?' says I—for she was called Sonsy—' we have often sarved her one way or other.'

" ' Ax me no questions about her, Shane,' says she, ' don't I know what she did to Ned Donnelly, that was to be pitied, if ever a man was to be pitied, for as good as seven months after his marriage until I relieved him ; 'twas gone to a thread he was, and didn't they pay me decently for my throuble.'

" ' Well, and what am I to do, Mary ?' says I, knowing very well that what she *sed* was thrue enough, although I didn't wish her to see that I was afeard.

" ' Why,' says she, ' you must first exchange money with me, and then, if you do as I bid you, you may lave the rest to myself.'

" I then took out, begad, a decent lot of silver—say a crown or so—

[1] Fair girl.

for my blood was up, and the money was flush—and gave it to her; for which I got a *cronagh-bawn* halfpenny in exchange.

"'Now,' says she, 'Shane, you must keep this in your company, and for your life and sowl, don't part with it for nine days after your marriage: but there's more to be done,' says she—'hould out your right knee.' So with this she unbuttoned three buttons of my buck-skins, and made me loose the knot of my garther on the right leg. 'Now,' says she, 'if you keep them loose till after the priest says the words, and won't let the money I gave you go out of your company for nine days, along with something else I'll do that you're to know nothing about, there's no fear of all their *pishthroges*.'[1] She then pulled off her right shoe, and threw it after us for luck.

"We were now all in motion once more—the bride riding behind my man, and the bridesmaid behind myself—a fine bouncing girl she was, but not to be mintioned in the one year with my darlin'—in troth, it wouldn't be aisy getting such a couple as we were the same day, though it's myself that says it. Mary, dressed in a black castor hat, like a man's, a white muslin coat, with a scarlet silk handkercher about her neck, with a silver buckle and a blue ribbon, for luck, round her waist; her fine hair wasn't turned up, at all at all, but hung down in beautiful curls on her shoulders; her eyes you would think were all light; her lips as plump and as ripe as cherries—and maybe it's myself that wasn't to that time of day without tasting them anyhow; and her teeth, so even, and as white as a burnt bone. The day bate all for beauty; I don't know whetner it was from the lightness of my own spirit it came, but I think that such a day I never saw from that to this: indeed, I thought everything was dancing and smiling about me, and sartainly everyone said that such a couple hadn't been married, nor such a wedding seen in the parish, for many a long year before.

"All the time, as we went along, we had the music; but then at nrst we were mightily puzzled what to do with the fiddler. To put him as a hind rider it would prevent him from playing, bekase how could he keep the fiddle before him, and another so close to him? To put him foremost was as bad, for he couldn't play and hould the bridle together; so at last my uncle proposed that he should get behind himself, turn his face to the horse's tail, and saw away like a Trojan.

"It might be about four miles or so to the priest's house, and, as the day was fine, we got on gloriously. One thing, however, became troublesome; you see there was a cursed set of ups and downs on the road, and as the riding *coutrements* were so bad with a great many of the weddiners, those that had no saddles, going down steep places, would work onward bit by bit, in spite of all they could do, till they'd be fairly on the horse's neck, and the women behind them would be on the animal's shoulders; and it required nice managing to balance themselves, for they might as well sit on the edge of a dale boord. Many of them got tosses this way, though it all passed in good

[1] Charms of an evil nature.

humour. But no two among the whole set were more puzzled by this than my uncle and the fiddler—I think I see my uncle this minute with his knees sticking into the horse's shoulders and his two hands upon his neck, keeping himself back, with a *cruht*[1] upon him, and the fiddler, with his heels away towards the horse's tail, and he stretched back against my uncle, for all the world like two bricks laid against one another, and one of them falling. 'Twas the same thing going up a hill; whoever was behind would be hanging over the horse's tail, with the arm about the fore-rider's neck or body, and the other houlding the baste by the mane, to keep them both from sliding off backwards. Many a come down there was among them—but as I said, it was all in good humour; and, accordingly, as regularly as they fell they were sure to get a cheer.

"When we got to the priest's house there was a hearty welcome for us all. The bride and I with our next kindred and friends went into the parlour: along with these there was a set of young fellows who had been bachelors of the bride's, that got in with an intention of getting the first kiss, and, in coorse, of bateing myself out of it. I got a whisper of this; so, by my song, I was determined to cut them all out in that, so well as I did in getting herself; but, you know, I couldn't be angry, even if they had got the foreway of me in it, bekase it's an old custom. While the priest was going over the business, I kept my eye about me, and, sure enough, there were seven or eight fellows all waiting to snap at her. When the ceremony drew near a close, I got up on one leg, so that I could bounce to my feet like lightning, and when it was finished, I got her in my arm before you could say Jack Robinson, and swinging her behind the priest, gave her the husband's first kiss. The next minute there was a rush after her; but, as I had got the first, it was but fair that they should come in according as they could, I thought, bekase, you know, it was all in the coorse of practice; but, hould, there were two words to be said to that, for what does Father Dollard do, but shoves them off—and a fine stout shoulder he had—shoves them off, like children, and getting his arms about Mary, gives her half a dozen smacks at least—oh, consuming to the one less—that mine was only a *cracker* to them. The rest, then, all kissed her, one after another, according as they could come in to get one. We then went straight to his reverence's barn, which had been cleared out for us the day before by his own directions, where we danced for an hour or two, and his reverence and his curate along with us.

"When this was over we mounted again, the fiddler taking his ould situation behind my uncle. You know it is usual, after getting the knot tied, to go to a public-house or *shebeen*, to get some refreshment after the journey; so, accordingly, we went to little lame Larry Spooney's—grandfather to him that was transported the other day for

[1] The hump which constitutes a round-shouldered man. If the reader has ever seen Hogarth's illustrations of Hudibras, and remembers the redoubtable hero as he sits on horseback, he will be at no loss in comprehending what a *cruht* means.

staling Bob Beaty's sheep; he was called Spooney himself, for his sheep-stealing, ever since Paddy Keenan made the song upon him, ending with 'his house never wants a good ram-horn spoon;' so that, let people say what they will, these things run in the blood—well, we went to his shebeen house, but the tithe of us couldn't get into it; so we sot on the green before the door, and, by my song, we *took*[1] decently with *him*, anyhow; and, only for my uncle, it's odd's but we would have been all fuddled.

"It was now that I began to notish a kind of coolness between my party and the bride's, and for some time I didn't know what to make of it. I wasn't long so, however; for my uncle, who still had his eyes about him, comes over to me, and says, 'Shane, I doubt there will be bad work amongst these people, particularly betwixt the Dorans and the Flanagans—the truth is that the old business of the lawshoot will break out, and except they're kept from drink, take my word for it, there will be blood spilled. The running for the bottle will be a good excuse,' says he, 'so I think we had better move home before they go too far in the drink.'

"Well, any way, there was truth in this; so, accordingly, the reckoning was *peed*, and, as this was the thrate of the weddiners to the bride and bridegroom, every one of the men clubbed his share, but neither I nor the girls anything. Ha—ha—ha! Am I alive at all? I never—ha—ha—ha—! I never laughed so much in one day as I did in that, and I can't help laughing at it yet. Well, well! when we all got on the top of our horses, and sich other iligant cattle as we had—the crowning of a king was nothing to it. We were now purty well, I thank you, as to liquor; and as the knot was tied, and all safe, there was no end to our good spirits; so, when we took the road, the men were in high blood, particularly Billy Cormick, the tailor, who had a pair of long cavaldry spurs upon him, that he was scarcely able to walk in—and he not more nor four feet high. The women, too, were in blood, having faces upon them, with the hate of the day and the liquor, as full as trumpeters.

"There was now a great jealousy among them that were bint for winning the bottle; and when one horseman would cross another, striving to have the whip hand of him when they'd set off, why, you see, his horse would get a cut of the whip itself for his pains. My uncle and I, however, did all we could to pacify them; and their own bad horsemanship, and the screeching of the women, prevented any strokes at that time. Some of them were ripping up ould sores against one another as they went along; others, particularly the youngsters, with their sweethearts behind them, coorting away for the life of them, and some might be heard miles off, singing and laughing: and you may be sure the fiddler behind my uncle wasn't idle, no more nor another. In this way we dashed on gloriously, till we came in sight of the Dumbhill, where we were to start for the bottle. And now you might see the men fixing themselves on their saddles,

[1] Drunk.

sacks, and suggawns; and the women tying kerchiefs and shawls about their caps and bonnets, to keep them from flying off, and then gripping their forerіders hard and fast by the bosoms. When we got to the Dumbhill, there were five or six fellows that didn't come with us to the priest's, but met us with cudgels in their hands, to prevent any of them from starting before the others, and to show fair play.

"Well, when they were all in a lump—horses, mules, ragherays, and asses—some, as I said, with saddles, some with none; and all just as I tould you before—the word was given, and off they scoured, myself along with the rest; and divil be off me, if ever I saw such another sight but itself before or since. Off they skelped through thick and thin, in a cloud of dust like a mist about us: but it was a mercy that the life wasn't trampled out of some of us; for before we had gone fifty perches, the one third of them were sprawling atop of one another on the road. As for the women, they went down right and left—sometimes bringing the horsemen with them; and many of the boys getting black eyes and bloody noses on the stones. Some of them, being half blind with the motion and the whisky, turned off the wrong way, and galloped on, thinking they had completely distanced the crowd; and it wasn't until they cooled a bit that they found out their mistake.

"But the best sport of all was when they came to the *Lazy Corner*, just at Jack Gallagher's *flush*,[1] where the water came out a good way acrass the road; being in such a flight, they either forgot or didn't know how to turn the angle properly, and plash went above thirty of them, coming down right on the top of one another, souse in the pool. By this time there was about a dozen of the best horsemen a good distance before the rest, cutting one another up for the bottle: among these were the Dorans and Flanagans; but they, you see, wisely enough, dropped their women at the beginning, and only rode single. I myself didn't mind the bottle, but kept close to Mary, for fraid that, among sich a divil's pack of half-mad fellows, anything might happen her. At any rate, I was next the first batch: but where do you think the tailor was all this time? Why, away off like lightning, miles before them—flying like a swallow: and how he kept his sate so long has puzzled me from that day to this; but, anyhow, truth's best—there he was topping the hill ever so far before them. After all, the unlucky crathur nearly missed the bottle; for when he turned to the bride's house, instead of pulling up as he ought to do—why, to show his horsemanship to the crowd that was out looking at them, he should begin to cut up the horse right and left, until he made him take the garden ditch in full flight, landing him among the cabbages. About four yards or five from the spot where the horse lodged himself was a well, and a purty deep one too, by my word; but not a sowl present could tell what become of the tailor, until Ower Smith chanced to look into the well, and saw his long spurs

[1] Flush is a pool of water that spreads nearly across a road. It is usually fed by a small mountain stream, and in consequence of rising and falling rapidly, it is called "Flush."

just above the water; so he was pulled up in a purty pickle, not worth the washing; but what did he care? although he had a small body, the sorra one of him but had a sowl big enough for Golias or Sampson the Great.

"As soon as he got his eyes clear, right or wrong, he insisted on getting the bottle: but he was late, poor fellow, for before he got out of the garden, two of them cums up—Paddy Doran and Peter Flanagan, cutting one another to pieces, and not the length of your nail between them. Well, well, that was a terrible day, sure enough. In the twinkling of an eye they were both off the horses, the blood streaming from their bare heads, struggling to take the bottle from my father, who didn't know which of them to give it to. He knew if he'd hand to one, the other would take offince, and then he was in a great puzzle, striving to razon with them; but long Paddy Doran caught it while he was spaking to Flanagan, and the next instant Flanagan measured him with a heavy loaded whip, and left him stretched upon the stones. And now the work began: for by this time the friends of both parties came up and joined them. Such knocking down, such roaring among the men, and screeching and clapping of hands and wiping of heads among the women, when a brother, or a son, or a husband would get his gruel. Indeed, out of a fair, I never saw anything to come up to it. But during all this work, the busiest man among the whole set was the tailor, and what was worse of all for the poor crathur, he should single himself out against both parties, bekase you see he thought they were cutting him out of his right to the bottle.

"They had now broken up the garden gate for weapons, all except one of the posts, and fought into the garden; when nothing should sarve Billy but to take up the large heavy post, as if he could destroy the whole faction on each side. Accordingly he came up to big Matthew Flanagan, and was rising it just as if he'd fell him, when Matt, catching him by the nape of the neck and the waistband of the breeches, went over very quietly, and dropped him a second time, heels up, into the well, where he might have been yet, only for my mother-in-law, who dragged him out with a great deal to do: for the well was too narrow to give him room to turn.

"As for myself and all my friends, as it happened to be my own wedding, and at our own place, we couldn't take part with either of them; but we endeavoured all in our power to *red*[1] them, and a tough task we had of it, until we saw a pair of whips going hard and fast among them, belonging to Father Corrigan and Father James, his curate. Well, it's wonderful how soon a priest can clear up a quarrel! In five minutes there wasn't a hand up—instead of that they were ready to run into mouse-holes.

"'What, you murderers,' says his reverence, 'are you bint to have each other's blood upon your heads, ye vile infidels, ye cursed unchristian Antherntarians? are you going to get yourselves hanged like

[1] Separate or pacify.

sheep-stalers? down with your sticks I command you : do you know—will ye give yourselves time to see who's spaking to you—you blood-thirsty set of Episcopalians? I command you, in the name of the Catholic Church and the Blessed Virgin Mary, to stop this instant, if you don't wish me,' says he, 'to turn you into stocks and stones where you stand, and make world's wonders of you as long as you live. Doran, if you rise your hand more, I'll strike it dead on your body, and to your mouth you'll never carry it while you have breath in your carcass,' says he.—'Clear off, you Flanagans, you butchers you, or by St. Dominick I'll turn the heads round upon your bodies in the twinkling of an eye, so that you'll not be able to look a quiet Christian in the face again. Pretty respect you have for the decent couple in whose house you have kicked up such a hubbub! Is this the way people are to be deprived of their dinners on your accounts, you fun-galeering thieves!'

"'Why then, plase your reverence, by the—hem—I say, Father Corrigan, it wasn't my fault, but that villain Flanagan's, for he knows I fairly won the bottle—and would have distanced him, only that when I was far before him, the vagabone, he galloped acrass me on the way, thinking to thrip up the horse.'

"'You lying scoundrel,' says the priest, 'how dare you tell me a falsity,' says he, 'to my face? how could he gallop acrass you if you were far before him? Not a word more, or I'll leave you without a mouth to your face, which will be a double share of provision and bacon saved anyway. And Flanagan, *you* were as much to blame as he, and must be chastised for your raggamuffinly conduct,' says he, 'and so must you both, and all your party, particularly you and he, as the ringleaders. Right well I know it's the grudge upon the lawsuit you had, and not the bottle, that occasioned it: but by St. Peter, to Loughderg both of you must tramp for this.'

"'Ay, and by St. Pether, they both desarve it as well as a thief does the gallows,' said a little blustering voice belonging to the tailor, who came forward in a terrible passion, looking for all the world like a drowned rat. 'Ho, by St. Pether, they do, the vagabones; for it was myself that won the bottle, your reverence; and by this and by that,' says he, 'the bottle I'll have, or some of their crowns will crack for it: blood or whisky I'll have, your reverence, and I hope that you'll assist me?'

"'Why, Billy, are you here?' says Father Corrigan, smiling down upon the figure the fellow cut, with his long spurs and his big whip —'what in the world tempted *you* to get on horseback, Billy?'

"'By the powers, I was miles before them,' says Billy, 'and after this day, your reverence, let no man say that I couldn't ride a steeple-chase across Clocknagooran.'

"'Why, Billy, how did you stick on at all at all,' says his reverence.

"'How do I know how I stuck on,' says Billy, 'nor whether I stuck on at all or not; all I know is, that I was on horseback before leaving the Dumb-hill, and that I found them pulling me by the heels out of the well in the corner of the garden, and that, your reverence, when

the first was only topping the hill there below, as Lanty Magowran tells me, who was looking on.'

"'Well, Billy,' says Father Corrigan, 'you must get the bottle ; and as for you Dorans and Flanagans, I'll make examples of you for this day's work—that you may reckon on. You are a disgrace to the parish, and what's more, a disgrace to your priest. How can luck or grace attind the marriage of any young couple that there's such work at? Before you leave this, you must all shake hands, and promise never to quarrel with each other while grass grows or water runs ; and if you don't, by the blessed St. Dominick, I'll *eximnicate* ye both, and all belonging to you into the bargain ; so that ye'll be the pitiful examples and shows to all that look upon you.'

"'Well, well, your reverence,' says my father-in-law, 'let all by-gones be by-gones ; and please God, they will before they go be better friends than ever they were. Go now and clane yourselves, take the blood from about your faces, for the dinner's ready an hour agone ; but if you all respect the place you're in, you'll show it, in regard of the young crathurs that's going, in the name of God, to face the world together, and of coorse wishes that this day at laste should pass in pace and quietness : little did I think there was any friend or neighbour here that would make so little of the place or people, as was done for nothing at all, in the face of the country.'

"'God he sees,' says my mother-in-law, 'that there's them here this day we didn't desarve this from, to rise such a *norration*, as if the house was a shebeen or a public-house ! It's myself didn't think either me or my poor colleen here, not to mention the dacent people she's joined to, would be made so little of, as to have our place turned into a play-acthur—for a play-acthur couldn't be worse.'

"'Well,' says my uncle, 'there's no help for spilt milk, I tell you, nor for spilt blood either: tare-an-ounty, sure we're all Irishmen, relations, and Catholics through other, and we oughtn't to be this way. Come away to dinner—by the powers, we'll duck the first man that says a loud word for the remainder of the day. Come, Father Corrigan, and carve the goose, or the geese, for us—for, by my sannies, I bleeve there's a baker's dozen of them ; but we've plenty of *Latin* for them, and your reverence and Father James here understands that langidge, any how—larned enough there, I think, gintlemen.'

"'That's right, Brian,' shouts the tailor—'that's right ; there must be no fighting : by the powers, the first man attempts it, I'll brain him—fell him to the earth like an ox, if all belonging to him was in my way.'

"This threat from the tailor went farther, I think, in putting them into good humour nor even what the priest said. They then washed and claned themselves, and accordingly went to their dinners. Billy himself marched with his terrible whip in his hand, and his long cavalry spurs sticking near ten inches behind him, draggled to the tail like a bantling cock after a shower. But maybe there was more draggled tails and bloody noses nor poor Billy's, or even nor was occasioned by the fight ; for after Father Corrigan had come, several

of them dodged up, some with broken shins and heads, and wet clothes, that they'd got on the way by the mischances of the race, particularly at the *Flush*. But I don't know how it was ; somehow the people in them days didn't value these things a straw. They were far hardier then nor they are now, and never went to law at all at all. Why, I've often known skulls to be broken, and the people to die afterwards, and there would be nothing more about it, except to brake another skull or two for it ; but neither *crowner's quest*, nor judge, nor jury was ever troubled at all about it. And so sign's on it, people were then innocent, and not up to law and counsellors as they are now. If a person happened to be killed in a fight at a fair or market, why he had only to appear after his death to one of his friends, and get a number of masses offered up for his sowl, and all was right ; but now the times are clane altered, and there's nothing but hanging and transporting for such things ; although that won't bring the people to life again."

"I suppose," said Andy Morrow, "you had a famous dinner, Shane."

"'Tis you that may say that, Mr. Morrow," replied Shane : "but the house, you see, wasn't able to hould one half of us ; so there was a dozen or two tables borrowed from the neighbours, and laid one after another in two rows, on the green, beside the river that ran along the garden hedge, side by side. At one end Father Corrigan sat, with Mary and myself, and Father James at the other. There were three five-gallon kegs of whisky, and I ordered my brother to take charge of them, and there he sat beside them, and filled the bottles as they were wanted, bekase, if he had left that job to strangers, many a spalpeen there would make away with lots of it. Mayrone, such a sight as the dinner was ! I didn't lay my eye on the fellow of it since, sure enough, and I'm now an ould man, though I was then a young one. Why there was a pudding boiled in the end of a sack ; and troth it was a thumper, only for the straws—for you see, when they were making it, they had to draw long straws acrass in order to keep it from falling asunder : a fine plan it is, too. Jack M'Kenna, the carpenther, carved it with a hand-saw, and if he didn't curse the same straws, I'm not here. 'Draw them out, Jack,' said Father Corrigan—'draw them out. It's asy known, Jack, you never ate a polite dinner, you poor awkward spalpeen, or you'd have pulled out the straws the first thing you did, man alive.' Such lashins of corned beef, and rounds of beef, and legs of mutton, and bacon—turkeys, and geese, and barn-door fowls, young and fat. They may talk as they will, but commend me to a piece of good ould bacon, ate with crock butther, and phaties, and cabbage. Sure enough they leathered away at everything, but this and the pudding were the favourites. Father Corrigan gave up the carving in less than no time, for it would take him half a day to sarve them all, and he wanted to provide for number one. After helping himself, he set my uncle to it, and maybe he didn't slash away right and left. There was half a dozen gorsoons carrying about the beer in cans, with froth upon it like barm —but that was beer in arnest, Nancy—I'll say no more.

"When the dinner was over, you would think there was as much left as would sarve a regiment; and sure enough, a right hangry ragged regiment was there to take care of it, though, to tell the truth, there was as much taken into Finigan's as would be sure to give us all a rousing supper. Why, there was such a troop of beggars—men, women, and childher, sitting over on the sunny side of the ditch, as would make short work of the whole dinner had they got it. Along with Father Corrigan and me was my father and mother, and Mary's parents; my uncle, cousins, and nearest relations on both sides. Oh, it's Father Corrigan, God rest his sowl, he's *now* in glory, and so he was *then*, also—how he did crow and laugh! 'Well, Matthew Finigan,' says he, 'I can't say but I'm happy that your *Colleen Bawn* here has lit upon a husband that's no discredit to the family—and it is herself didn't drive her pigs to a bad market,' says he. 'Why, in troth, Father, avourneen,' says my mother-in-law, 'they'd be hard to plase that couldn't be satisfied with them she got; not saying but she had her pick and choice of many a good offer, and might have got richer matches; but Shane Fadh M'Cawell, although you're sitting there beside my daughter, I'm prouder to see you on my own flure, the husband of my child, nor if she'd got a man with four times your substance.'

"'Never heed the girls for knowing where to choose,' says his reverence, slily enough: 'but, upon my word, only she gave us all the slip, to tell the truth, I had another husband than Shane in my eye for her, and that was my own nevvy, Father James's brother here.'

"'And I'd be proud of the connection,' says my father-in-law; 'but, you see, these girls won't look much to what you or I'll say, in choosing a husband for themselves. How-and-iver, not making little of your nevvy, Father Michael, I say he's not to be compared with that same bouchal sitting beside Mary there.' 'No, nor by the powdhers-o'-war, never will,' says Billy Cormick the tailor, who had come over and slipped in on the other side, betune Father Corrigan and the bride—'by the powdhers-o'-war, he'll never be fit to be compared with me, I tell you, till yesterday comes back again.'

"'Why, Billy,' says the priest, 'you're in every place.' 'But where I ought to be!' says Billy; 'and that's hard and fast tackled to Mary Bane, the bride here, instead of that steeple of a fellow she has got,' says the little cock.

"'Billy, I thought you were married,' said Father Corrigan.

"'Not I, your reverence,' says Billy; 'but I'll soon do something, Father Michael—I have been threatened this long time, but I'll do it at last.'

"'He's not exactly married, sir,' says my uncle; 'there's a colleen present' (looking at the bridesmaid) 'that will soon have his name upon her.'

"'Very good, Billy,' says the priest, 'I hope you will give us a rousing wedding—equal, at least, to Shane Fadh's.'

"'Why, then, your reverence, except I get such a darling as Molly Bane here—and by this and by that, it's you that *is* the darling,

Molly asthore—what come over me, at all at all, that I didn't think of you,' says the little man, drawing closer to her, and poor Mary smiling good naturedly at his spirit.

"'Well, and what if you *did* get such a darling as Molly Bane there?' says his reverence.

"'Why, except I get the likes of her for a wife—upon second thoughts, I don't like marriage, anyway,' said Billy, winking against the priest—'I'll lade such a life as your reverence; and, by the powdhers, it's a thousand pities that I wasn't made into a priest instead of a tailor.—For, you see, if I had,' says he, giving a verse of an old song—

'For, you see, if I had,
It's I'd be the lad
That would show all my people such larning;
And when they'd go wrong,
Why, instead of a song,
I'd give them a lump of a sarmin.'

"'Billy,' says my father-in-law, 'why don't you make a hearty dinner, man alive? Go back to your sate and finish your male—you're aiting nothing to signify.' 'Me!' says Billy—'why, I'd scorn to ate a hearty dinner; and I'd have you to know, Matt Finigan, that it wasn't for the sake of your dinner I came here, but in regard to your family, and bekase I wished him well that's sitting beside your daughter: and it ill becomes your father's son to cast up your dinner in my face, or any one of my family; but a blessed minute longer I'll not stay among you. Give me your hand, Shane Fadh, and you, Mary—may goodness grant you pace and happiness every night and day you both rise out of your beds.—I made that coat your husband has on his back beside you, and a betther fit was never made; but I didn't think it would come to my turn to have my dinner cast up this a-way, as if I was aiting it for charity.'

"'Hut, Billy,' says I, 'sure it was all out of kindness; he didn't mane to offind you.'

"'It's no matter,' says Billy, beginning to cry, 'he *did* offind me; and it's low days with me to bear an affront from him, or the likes of him; but by the powdhers-o'-war,' says he, getting into a great rage, 'I *won't* bear it—only as you're an old man yourself, I'll not rise my hand to you; but let any man now that has the heart to take up your quarrel, come out and stand before me on the sod here.'

"Well, by this time, you'd tie all that were present with three straws, to see Billy stripping himself, and his two wrists not thicker than drumsticks. While the tailor was raging, for he was pretty well up with what he had taken, another person made his appearance at the far end of the *boreen* that led to the green where we sot. He was mounted upon the top of a sack that was upon the top of a sober-looking baste enough, God knows; he jogging along at his ase, his legs dangling down from the sack on each side, and the long skirts of his coat hanging down behind him. Billy was now getting pacified,

bekase they gave way to him a little; so the fun went round, and they sang, roared, danced, and coorted, right and left.

"When the stranger came as far as the skirt of the green, he turned the horse over quite nathural to the wedding; and, sure enough, when he jogged up, it was Friar Rooney himself, with a sack of oats for he had been *questin*.[1] Well, sure the ould people couldn't do less nor all go over to put the *failtah*[2] on him. 'Why, then,' says my father-and-mother-in-law, ''tis yourself, Friar Rooney, that's as welcome as the flowers of May; and see who's here before you—Father Corrigan and Father Dollard.'

"'Thank you, thank you, Molshy—thank you, Matthew—troth, I know that 'tis I am welcome.'

"'Ay, and you're welcome again, Father Rooney,' said *my* father, going down and shaking hands with him, and I'm proud to see you here. Sit down, your reverence—here's everything that's good, and plinty of it, and if you don't make much of yourself, never say an ill fellow dealt with you.'

"The friar stood while my father was speaking, with a pleasant, contented face upon him, only a little roguish and droll.

"'Hah! Shane Fadh,' says he, smiling drily at me, 'you *did* them all, I see. You have her there, the flower of the parish, blooming beside you; but I knew as much six months ago, ever since I saw you bid her good-night at the hawthorn. Who looked back so often, Mary, eh? Ay, laugh and blush—do—throth, 'twas I that caught you, but you didn't see me, though. Well, a colleen, and if you did, too, you needn't be ashamed of your bargain, anyhow. You see, the way I came to persave yees that evening was this—but I'll tell it by-and-by. In the manetime,' says he, sitting down, and attacking a fine piece of cornbeef and greens, 'I'll take care of a certain acquaintance of mine,' says he. 'How are you, reverend gintlemen of the *Secularity*. You'll permit a poor friar to sit and ate his dinner in your presence, I humbly hope.'

"'Frank,' says Father Corrigan, 'lay your hand upon your conscience, or upon your stomach, which is the same thing, and tell us honestly, how many dinners you eat on your travels among *my* parishioners this day.'

"'As I'm a sinner, Michael, this is the only thing to be called a *dinner* I eat this day. Shane Fadh—Mary, both your healths, and God grant you all kinds of luck and happiness, both here and hereafter! All your healths in gineral; gintlemen *seculars!*'

"'Thank you, Frank,' said Father Corrigan; 'how did you speed to-day?'

"'How can any man speed that comes after you?' says the Friar; 'I'm after travelling the half of the parish for that poor bag of oats that you see standing against the ditch.'

"'In other words, Frank,' says the priest, 'you took *Althadhawan*

[1] Questin—When an Irish priest or friar collects corn or money from the people in a gratuitous manner the act is called "questin."

[2] Welcome.

in your way, and in about half a dozen houses filled your sack, and then turned your horse's head towards the good cheer, by way of *accident* only.'

"'And was it by way of accident, Mr. *Secular*, that I got you and that iloquent young gintleman, your curate, here before me? Do you feel that, man of the world? Father James, your health, though—you're a good young man as far as saying nothing goes; but it's better to sit still than rise up and fall, so I commend you for your *discration*,' says he; 'but I'm afeard your master there won't make you much, fitter for the kingdom of heaven, anyhow.'

"'I believe, Father Corrigan,' says my uncle, who loved to see the priest and the friar at it, 'that you've met with your match—I think Father Rooney's able for you.'

"'Oh, sure,' says Father Corrigan, 'he was joker to the college of the *Sorebones* in Paris; he got as much education as enabled him to say mass in Latin, and to beg oats in English, for his jokes.'

"'Troth, and,' says the friar, 'if you were to get your larning on the same terms, you'd be guilty of very little knowledge; why, Michael, I never knew you to attempt a joke but once, and I was near shedding tears, there was something very sorrowful in it.'

"This brought the laugh against the priest. 'Your health, Molshy,' says he, winking at my mother-in-law, and then giving my uncle, who sat beside him, a *nudge*; 'I believe, Brian, I'm giving it to him.' 'Tis yourself that is,' says my uncle; 'give him a wipe or two more.' Wait till he answers the last,' says the friar.

"'He's always joking,' says Father James, 'when he thinks he'll make anything by it.'

"'Ay!' says the friar, 'then God help you both if you were left to your jokes for your feeding; for a poorer pair of gentlemen wouldn't be found in Christendom.'

"'And I believe,' says Father Corrigan, 'if you depinded for your feeding upon your divinity instead of your jokes, you'd be as poor as a man in the last stage of a consumption.'

"This threw the laugh against the friar, who smiled himself; but he was a dry man that never laughed much.

"'Sure,' says the friar, who was never at a loss, 'I have yourself and your nephew for examples that it's possible to live and be well fed without divinity.'

"'At any rate,' says my uncle, putting in *his* tongue, 'I think you're both very well able to make divinity a joke betune you,' says he.

"'Well done, Brian,' says the friar, 'and so they are, for I believe it is the only subject they can joke upon; and I beg your pardon, Michael, for not excepting it before; on that subject I allow you to be humoursome.'

"'If that be the case, then,' says Father Corrigan, 'I must give up your company, Frank, in order to avoid the force of bad example; for you're so much in the habit of joking on everything else, that you're not able to except even divinity.'

"'You may aisily give *me* up,' says the friar, 'but how will you be

able to forget Father Corrigan? I'm afeard you will find *his* acquaintance as great a detriment to yourself as it is to others in that respect.'

"'What makes you say,' says Father James, who was more in arnest than the rest, 'that my uncle won't make me fit for the kingdom of heaven?'

"'I had a pair of rasons for it, Jemmy,' says the friar; 'one is, that he doesn't understand the subject himself; and another is, that you haven't capacity for it, even if he did. You've a want of nathural parts—a whackum here,' pointing to his forehead.

"'I beg your pardon, Frank,' says Father James, 'I deny your premises, and I'll now argue in Latin with you, if you wish, upon any subject you please.'

"'Come, then,' says the friar,—'*Kid-eat-ivy mare-eat-hay.*'

"'Kid—what?' says the other.

"'*Kid-eat-ivy mare-eat-hay*,' answers the friar.

"'I don't know what you're at,' says Father James, 'but I'll argue in Latin with you as long as you wish.'

"'Tut, man,' says Father Rooney, 'Latin's for schoolboys; but come, now, I'll take you in another language—I'll try you in Greek—*In-mud-eel-is in-clay-none-is in-fir-tar-is in-oak-none-is.*'

"The curate looked at him, amazed, not knowing what answer to make. At last says he, 'I don't profess to know Greek, bekase I never larned it—but stick to the Latin, and I'm not afeard of you.'

"'Well, then,' says the friar, 'I'll give you a trial at that—*Afflat te canis ter—Forte dux fel flat in guther.*'

"'A flat-tay-cannisther—Forty ducks fell flat in the gutthers!' says Father James—'why that's English!'

"'English!' says the friar; 'oh, good-bye to you, Mr. Secular; if that's your knowledge of Latin, you're an honour to your tachers and to your cloth.'

"Father Corrigan now laughed heartily at the puzzling the friar gave Father James. 'James,' says he, 'never heed him; he's only pesthering you with bog-latin; but, at any rate, to do him justice, he's not a bad scholar, I can tell you that. . . . . Your health, Frank, you droll crathur—your health. I have only one fault to find with you, and that is, that you fast and mortify yourself too much. Your fasting has reduced you from being formerly a friar of very genteel dimensions to a cut of corpulency that smacks strongly of penance—fifteen stone at least.'

"'Why,' says the friar, looking down, quite plased entirely, at the cut of his own waist, which, among ourselves, was no trifle, and giving a growl of a laugh—the most he ever gave: 'if what you pray here benefits you in the next life, as much as what I fast does me in this, it will be well for the world in general, Michael.'

"'How can *you* say, Frank,' says Father James, 'with such a carkage as that, that you're a *poor* friar? Upon my credit, when you die, I think the angels will have a job of it in wafting you upwards.'

"'Jemmy, man, was it *you* that said it!—why, my light's beginning to shine upon you, or you never could have got out so much,' says

Father Rooney, putting his hands over his brows and looking up toardst him. 'But if you ever read scripthur, which I suppose you're not overburdened with, you would know that it says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," but not blessed are the poor in flesh—now, mine is spiritual poverty.'

"'Very true, Frank,' says Father Corrigan, 'I believe there's a great dearth and poverty of spirituality about you, sure enough. But of all kinds of poverty, commend me to a friar's. Voluntary poverty's something, but it's the divil entirely for a man to be poor against his will. You friars boast of this voluntary poverty; but if there's a fat bit in any part of the parish, we, that are the lawful clargy, can't eat it, but you're sure to drop in, just in the nick of time, with your voluntary poverty.'

"'I'm sure, if we do,' says the friar, 'its nothing out of *your* pocket, Michael. I declare, I believe you begrudge us the air we breathe. But don't you know very well that our ordhers are apostolic, and that, of coorse, we have a more primitive appearance than you have.'

"'No such thing,' says the other; 'you, and the parsons, and the fat bishops, are too far from the right place—the only difference between you is that you are fat and lazy *by toleration*, whereas the others are fat and lazy *by authority*. *You* are fat and lazy on your ould horses, jogging about from house to house, and stuffing yourselves either at the table of other people's parishioners, or in your own convents in Dublin and elsewhere. *They* are rich, bloated gluttons, going about in their coaches, and wallying in wealth. Now, *we* are the golden mean, Frank, that live upon a little, and work hard for it. But, plase God, the day will come when we will step into their places, and be as we used to be.'

"'Why, you cormorant,' says the friar, a little nettled, for the dhrop was beginning to get up into his head—'sure, if we're fat *by toleration*, we're only *tolerably* fat, my worthy secular; but how can *you* condemn them, when you only want to get into their places, or have the face to tax anyone with living upon the people?'

"'You see,' says the friar, in a whisper to my uncle, 'how I sobered them in the larning, and they are good scholars for all that, but not near so deep read as myself.—Michael,' says he, 'now that I think on it—sure I'm to be at Denis O'Flaherty's *Month's mind* on Thursday next.'

"'Indeed, I would not doubt you,' says Father Corrigan. 'You wouldn't be apt to miss it.'

"'Why, the widdy Flaherty asked me yesterday, and I think that's proof enough that I'm not going unsent for.'

"By this time the company was hard and fast at the punch, the songs, and the dancing. The dinner had been cleared off, except what was before the friar, who held out wonderfully, and the beggars and shulers were clawing and scoulding one another about the divide. The dacentest of us went into the house for a while, taking the fiddler with us, and the rest stayed on the green to dance, where they were soon joined by lots of the counthry people, so that in a short time

there was a large number entirely. After sitting for some time within, Mary and I began, you may be sure, to get unasy, sitting, palavering among a parcel of ould sober folks; so, at last, out we slipped, and the few other dacent young people that were with us, to join the dance, and shake our toe along with the rest of them. When we made our appearance, the flure was instantly cleared for us, and then she and I danced the *Humours of Glin*.

"Well, it's no matter—it's all past now, and she lies low; but I may say that it wasn't very often danced in better style since, I'd wager.—Lord bless us—what a drame the world is!—The darling of my heart you war, avourneen machree. I think I see her with the modest smile upon her face, straight, and fair, and beautiful, and—hem—and when the dance was over, how she stood leaning upon me, and my heart within melting to her, and the look she'd give into my eyes and my heart, too, as much as to say, this is the happy day with me; and the blush still would fly acrass her face, when I'd press her, unknownst to the bystanders, aginst my beating heart. A suilish machree, she is now gone from me—lies low, and it all appears like a drame to me; but—hem—God's will be done!—sure she's happy!—och, och!

"Many a shake hands did I get from the neighbours' sons, wishing me joy—and I'm sure I couldn't do less than thrate them to a glass, you know; and 'twas the same way with Mary: many a neighbour's daughter, that she didn't do more nor know by eyesight, maybe, would come up and wish her happiness in the same manner, and she would say to me, 'Shane, avourneen, that's such a man's daughter—they're dacent friendly people, and we can't do less nor give her a glass.' I, of coorse, would go down and bring them over, after a little pulling—making, you see, as if they wouldn't come—to where my brother was handing out the native.

"In this way we passed the time till the evening came on, except that Mary and the bridesmaid were sent for to dance with the priests, who were within at the punch, in all their glory—Friar Rooney along with them, as jolly as a prince. I and my man, on seeing this, were for staying with the company; but my mother, who 'twas that came for them, says, 'Never mind the boys, Shane; come in with the girls, I say. You're just wanted at the present time, both of you; follow me for an hour or two, till their reverences within have a bit of a dance with the girls in the back room—we don't want to gather a crowd about them.' Well, we went in, sure enough, for a while; but, I don't know how it was, I didn't at all feel comfortable with the priests; for, you see, I'd rather sport my day with the boys and girls upon the green: so I gives Jack *the hard word*,[1] and in we went, when, behold you, there was Father Corrigan planted upon the side of a *settle*, Mary along with him, both waiting till they'd have a fling of a dance together, whilst the curate was capering on the flure before the bridesmaid, who was a purty dark-haired girl, to the tune of

[1] A pass-word, sign, or brief intimation, touching something of which a man is ignorant, that he may act accordingly.

'Kiss my lady,' and the friar planted between my mother and mother-in-law, one of his legs stretched out on a chair, he singing some funny song or other, that brought the tears to their eyes with laughing.

"Whilst Father James was dancing with the bridesmaid, I gave Mary the wink to come away from Father Corrigan, wishing, as I tould you, to get out amongst the youngsters once more; and Mary herself, to tell the truth, although he was the priest, was very willing to do so. I went over to her, and says, 'Mary, asthore, there's a friend without that wishes to spake to you.'

"'Well, says Father Corrigan, 'tell that friend that she's better employed, and that they must wait, whoever they are. I'm giving your wife, Shane,' says he, 'a little good advice that she won't be the worse for, and she can't go now.'

"Mary, in the meantime, had got up, and was coming away, when his reverence wanted her to stay till they'd finish their dance. 'Father Corrigan,' says she, 'let me go now, sir, if you plase, for they would think it bad threatment of me not to go out to them.'

"'Troth, and you'll do no such thing, acushla," says he, spaking so sweet to her; 'let them come in if they want you. Shane,' says his reverence, winking at me, and spaking in a whisper, 'stay here, you and the girls, till we take a hate at the dancing—don't you know that the ould women here, and me, will have to talk over some things about the fortune; you'll maybe get more nor you expect. Here, Molshy,' says he to my mother-in-law, 'don't let the youngsters out of this.'

"'Musha, Shane, ahagur,' says the ould woman, 'why will yees go and lave the place; sure you needn't be dashed before them—they'll dance themselves.'

"Accordingly we stayed in the room; but just on the word, Mary gives one spring away, laving his reverence by himself on the *settle*. 'Come away,' says she, 'lave them there, and let us go to where I can have a dance with yourself, Shane.'

"Well, I always loved Mary, but at that minute, if it would save her, I think I could spill my heart's blood for her. 'Mary,' says I, full to the throath, 'Mary, *acushla agus asthore machree*,[1] I could lose my life for you.'

"She looked in my face, and the tears came into her eyes. 'Shane, achora,' says she, 'amn't I *your happy* girl, at last?' She was leaning over against my breast; and what answer do you think I made?—I pressed her to my heart: I did more—*I took off my hat, and, looking up to God, I thanked him with tears in my eyes for giving me such a treasure.* 'Well, come now,' says she, 'to the green; so we went—and it's she that was the girl, when she did go among them, that threw them all into the dark for beauty and figure: as fair as a lily itself did she look—so tall and illegant that you wouldn't think she was a farmer's daughter at all; so we left the priests dancing away, for we could do no good before them.

[1] The very pulse and delight of my heart.

"When we had danced an hour or so, them that the family had the greatest regard for were brought in, unknownst to the rest, to drink tay. Mary planted herself beside me, and would sit nowhere else; but the friar got beside the bridesmaid, and I surely obsarved that many a time she'd look over, likely to split, at Mary, and it's Mary herself that gave her many's a wink to come to the other side; but, you know, out of manners, she was obliged to sit quietly, though, among ourselves, it's she that was like a hen on a hot griddle, beside the ould chap. It was now that the bride's cake was got. Ould Sonsy Mary marched over, and putting the bride on her feet, got up on a chair and broke it over her head, giving round a *fadge*[1] of it to every young person in the house, and they again to their acquaintances: but, lo and behold you, who should insist on getting a whang of it but the friar, which he rolled up in a piece of paper, and put it in his pocket. 'I'll have good fun,' says he, 'dividing this to-morrow among the *colleens* when I'm collecting my oats—the sorra one of me but'ill make them give me the worth of it of something, if it was only a fat hen or a square of bacon.' After tay the ould folk got full of talk; the youngsters danced round them; the friar sung like a thrush, and told many a droll story. The tailor had got drunk a little too early, and had to be put to bed, but he was now as fresh as ever, and able to dance a hornpipe, which he did on a door. The Dorans and the Flanagans had got quite thick after drubbing one another—Ned Doran began his coortship with Alley Flanagan on that day, and they were married soon after, so that the two factions joined, and never had another battle until the day of her berrial, when they were at it as fresh as ever. Several of those that were at the wedding were lying drunk about the ditches, or roaring, and swaggering, and singing about the place.—The night falling, those that were dancing on the green removed to the barn. Father Corrigan and Father James weren't ill off; but as for the friar, although he was as pleasant as a lark, there was hardly any such thing as making him tipsy. Father Corrigan wanted him to dance. 'What!' says he, 'would you have me to bring on an earthquake, Michael?—but who ever heard of a follower of St. Domnick, bound by his vow to voluntary poverty and mortifications—young couple, your health—will anybody tell me who mixed this, for they've knowledge worth a folio of the fathers?—— poverty and mortifications, going to shake his heel? By the bones of St. Domnick, I'd desarve to be suspinded, if I did. Will no one tell me who mixed this, I say, for they had a jewel of a hand at it? Och—

Let parsons prache and pray—
Let priests, too, pray and prache, sir;
What's the rason they
Don't practice what they tache, sir?
Forral, orrall, loll,
Forral, orrall, laddy—

[1] A liberal portion torn off a thick cake.

Sho da slainthah ma collenee agus ma bouchalee. Hoigh, oigh, oigh—healths all, gintlemen seculars ! 'Molshy,' says the friar to my mother-in-law,' 'send that *bocaun*[1] to bed—poor fellow, he's almost off—rouse yourself, James !—It's aisy to see that he's but young at it yet—that's right—he's sound asleep—just t« ss him into bed, and in an hour or so he'll be as fresh as a daisy.

Let parsons prache and pray—
Forral, orrall, loll——

"'For dear's sake, Father Rooney,' says my uncle, running in, in a great hurry, 'keep yourself quiet a little : here's the Squire and master Francis coming over to fulfil their promise ; he would have come up airlier, he says, but that he was away all day at the 'sizes.'

"'Very well,' says the friar, 'let him come—who's afeard—mind yourself, Michael.'

"In a minute or two they came in, and we all rose up of coorse to welcome them. The Squire *shuck* hands with the ould people, and afterwards with Mary and myself, wishing us all happiness—then with the two clergymen, and introduced master Frank to them ; and the friar made the young chap sit beside him. The masther then took a sate himself, and looked on, while they were dancing, with a smile of good humour on his face—while they, all the time, would give new touches and trebles, to show off all their steps before him. He was landlord both to my father and father-in-law ; and it's he that was the good man, and the gintleman, every inch of him. They may all talk as they will, but commend me, Mr. Morrow, to one of the old squires of former times for a landlord. The priests, with all their larning, were nothing to him for good breeding—he appeared so free, and so much at his ase, and even so respectful, that I don't think there was one in the house but would put their two hands under his feet to do him a sarvice.

"When he sat a while, my mother-in-law came over with a glass of nice punch that she had mixed, at laste equal to what the friar praised so well, and making a low curtshy, begged pardon for using such freedom with his honour, but hoped that he would just taste a little to the happiness of the young couple. He then drank our healths, and shuck hands with us both a second time, saying—although I can't, at all at all, give it in anything like his own words—'I am glad,' says he, to Mary's parents, 'that your daughter has made such a good choice'—throth, he did—the Lord be merciful to his sowl—God forgive me for what I was going to say, and he a Protestant ;—but if ever one of yees went to Heaven, Mr. Morrow, he did—'such a prudent choice ; and I congr—con—grathulate you,' says he to my father, 'on your connection with so industrious and respectable a family. You are now beginning the world for yourselves,' says he to Mary and me, 'and I cannot propose a better example to you both than that of your respective parents. From this forrid,' says he, 'I'm

[1] A soft, unsophisticated youth.

to considher you my tenants ; and I wish to take this opportunity of informing you both that should you act up to the opinion I entertain of you, by an attentive coorse of industry and good management, you will find in me an encouraging and indulgent landlord. I know, Shane,' says he to me, smiling, a little knowingly enough too, 'that you have been a little wild or so, but that's past, I trust. You have now serious duties to perform, which you cannot neglect—but you will not neglect them ; and be assured, I say again, that I shall feel pleasure in rendhering you every assistance in my power in the *cultiwation* and improvement of your farm.' 'Go over, both of you,' says my father, 'and thank his honour, and promise to do everything he says.' Accordingly, we did so ; I made my scrape as well as I could, and Mary blushed to the eyes, and dropped her curtshy.

"'Ah !' says the friar, 'see what it is to have a good landlord and a Christian gintleman to dale with. This is the feeling which should always bind a landlord and his tenants together. If I know your character, Squire Whitethorn, I believe you're not the man that would put a Protestant tenant over the head of a Catholic one, which shows, sir, your own good sense ; for what is a difference of religion, when people do what they ought to do? Nothing but the name. I trust, sir, we shall meet in a better place than this—both Protestant and Catholic.'

"'I am happy, sir, says the Squire, 'to hear such principles from a man who I thought was bound by his creed to hould different opinions.'

"'Ah, sir !' says the friar, 'you little know who you're talking to, if you think so. I happened to be collecting a taste of oats, with the permission of my friend, Doctor Corrigan, here, for I'm but a poor friar, sir, and dropped in *by mere accident ;* but, you know the hospitality of our country, Squire ; and that's enough—go they would not allow me, and I was mintioning to this young gintleman, your son, how we collected the oats, and he insisted on my calling—a generous, noble child ! I hope, sir, you have got proper instructors for him?'

"'Yes,' said the Squire ; 'I'm taking care of that point.'

"'What do you think, sir, but he insists on my calling over to-morrow, that he may give me *his* share of oats, as I told him that I was a friar, and that he was a little parishioner of mine ; but I added, that that wasn't right of him, without his papa's consint.'

"Well, sir,' says the Squire, 'as he has promised, I will support him : so if you'll ride over to-morrow, you shall have *a sack* of oats—at all events, I shall send you a sack in the coorse of the day.

"'I humbly thank you, sir,' says Father Rooney ; 'and I thank my noble little parishioner for his ginerosity to the poor ould friar. God mark you to grace, my dear ; and, wherever you go, take the ould man's blessing along with you.'

"They then bid us good night, and we all rose and saw them to the door.

"Father Corrigan now appeared to be getting sleepy. While this was going on, I looked about me, but couldn't see Mary. The tailor was just beginning to get a little hearty once more. Supper was talked

of, but there was no one that could ate anything; even the friar was against it. The clergy now got their horses, the friar laving his oats behind him: for we promised to send them home, and something more along with them the next day. Father James was roused up, but could hardly stir with a *heddick*. Father Corrigan was correct enough; but when the friar got up, he ran a little to the one side, upsetting Sonsy Mary, that sot a little beyond him. He then called over my mother-in-law to the dresser, and after some *collogin*,[1] she slipped two fat fowl, that had never been touched, into one of his coat pockets, that was big enough to hould a leg of mutton. My father then called me over, and said, 'Shane,' says he, 'hadn't you better slip Father Rooney a bottle or two of that whisky; there's plenty of it there that wasn't touched, and you won't be a bit the poorer of it, maybe, this day twelve months.' I accordingly dhropped two bottles of it into the other pocket, for his reverence wanted a *balance*, anyhow.

"'Now,' says he, 'before I go, kneel down both of you, till I give you my benediction.'

"We accordingly knelt down, and he gave us his blessing in Latin—my father standing at his shoulder to keep him steady.

"After they went, Mary threw the stocking—all the unmarried folks coming in the dark to see who it would hit. Bless my sowl, but she was the droll Mary—for what did she do, only put a big brogue of her father's into it, that was near two pounds weight; and who should it hit on the bare sconce but Billy Cormick, the tailor—who though the was fairly shot, for it levelled the crathur at once; though that wasn't hard to do, anyhow.

"This was the last ceremony: and Billy was well contented to get the knock, for you all know whoever the stocking strikes upon is to be marrid first. After this, my mother and mother-in-law set them to the dancing—and 'twas themselves that kept it up till long after day-light the next morning—but first they called me in to the next room where Mary was: and—and so ends my wedding; by the same token that I'm as dry as a stick."

"Come, Nancy," says Andy Morrow, "replenish again for us all, with a double measure for Shane Fadh—because he well desarves it."

"Why, Shane," observed Alick, "you must have a terrible fine memory of your own, or you couldn't tell it all so exact."

"There's not a man in the four provinces has sich a memory," replied Shane. "I never hard that story yet, but I could repate it in fifty years afterwards. I could walk up any town in the kingdom, and let me look at the signs, and I would give them to you agin jist exactly as they stood."

Thus ended the account of Shane Fadh's wedding; and, after finishing the porter, they all returned home, with an understanding that they were to meet the next night in the same place.

[1] Whispering.

LARRY M'FARLAND'S WAKE.

THE succeeding evening found them all assembled about Ned's fireside in the usual manner; where M'Roarkin, after a wheezy fit of coughing and a draught of Nancy's porter, commenced to give them an account of LARRY M'FARLAND'S WAKE.

We have observed before that M'Roarkin was desperately asthmatic, a circumstance which he felt to be rather an unpleasant impediment to the indulgence either of his mirth or sorrow. Every chuckle at his own jokes ended in a disastrous fit of coughing; and when he became pathetic, his sorrow was most ungraciously dissipated by the same cause; two facts which were highly relished by his audience.

"Larry M'Farland, when a young man, was considhered the best labourer within a great ways of him; and no servant man in the parish got within five shillings a quarter of his wages. Often and often, when his time would be near out, he'd have offers, from the rich farmers and gintlemen about him, of higher terms; so that he was seldom with one masther more nor a year at the very most. He could handle a flail with e'er a man that ever stepped in black leather; and at spade work there wasn't his equal. Indeed, he had a brain for everything: he could thatch better nor many that airned their bread by it; could make a slide car, straddle, or any other rough carpenter's work, that it would surprise you to think of it; could work a kish or side creels beautifully; mow as much as any two men—and go down a ridge of corn almost as fast as you could walk; was a great hand at ditching or draining meadows and bogs; but above all things he was famous for building hay-ricks and corn-stacks: and when Squire Farmer used to enter for the prize at the yearly ploughing match, he was sure to borrow the loan of Larry from whatever master he happened to be working with. And well he might; for the year out of four that he hadn't Larry he lost the prize; and everyone knew that if Larry had been at the tail of his plough, they would have had a tighter job of it in beating him.

"Larry was a light airy young man, that knew his own value; and was proud enough, God knows, of what he could do. He was, indeed, too much *up* to sport and divarsion, and never knew his own mind for a week. It was against him that he never stayed long in one place; for when he got a house of his own afterwards, he had no one that cared anything in particular about him. Whenever any man would hire him, he'd take care to have Easter and Whiss'n Mondays to himself, and one or two of the Christmas *Maragah-mores*.[1]—He was also a great dancer, fond of the dhrop—and used to dress above his

[1] Anglice—Big markets.

station ; going about with a shop-cloth coat, cassimoor small-clothes, and a caroline hat ; so that you would little think he was a poor sarvant man, labouring for his wages. One way or other, the money never sted long with him ; but he had light spirits, depended entirely on his good hands, and cared very little about the world, provided he could take his own fling out of it.

"In this way he went on from year to year, changing from one master to another ; every man that would employ him thinking he might get him to stop with him for a constancy. But it was all useless ; he'd be off after half a year, or sometimes a year at the most, for he was fond of roving ; and that man would never give himself any trouble about him afterwards ; though, maybe, if he had continted himself with him, and been sober and careful, he would be willing to assist and befriend him, when he might stand in need of assistance.

"It's an ould proverb, that 'birds of a feather flock together,' and Larry was a good proof of this. There was in the same neighbourhood a young woman named Sally Lowry, who was just the other end of himself, for a pair of good hands, a love of dress and of dances. She was well-looking, too, and knew it ; light and showy, but a tight and clane sarvant anyway. Larry and she, in short, began to coort, and were pulling a coard together for as good as five or six years. Sally, like Larry, always made a bargain when hiring to have the holly-days to herself ; and on these occasions she and Larry would meet and sport their figure ; going off with themselves, as soon as mass would be over, into Ballymavourneen, where he would collect a pack of fellows about him, and she a set of her own friends ; and there they'd sit down and drink for the length of the day, laving themselves without a penny of whatever little airning the dress left behind it, for Larry was never right except when he was giving a thrate to some one or other.

"After corrousing away till evening, they'd then set off to a dance ; and when they'd stay there till it would be late, he should see her home, of coorse never parting till they'd settle upon meeting another day.

"At last they got fairly tired of this, and resolved to take one another for better or worse.—Indeed they would have done this long ago, only that they could never get as much together as would pay the priest. How-and-ever, Larry spoke to his brother, who was a sober, industrious boy, that had laid by his *scollops* for the windy day,[1] and tould him that Sally Lowry and himself were going to yoke for life. Tom was a well-hearted, friendly lad, and thinking that Sally, who bore a good name for being such a clane sarvant, would make a good wife, he lent Larry two guineas, which, along with two more that Sally's aunt, who had no children of her own, gave her, enabled them to *over* their difficulties and get married. Shortly after this, his brother Tom

[1] In Irish the proverb is—"*Ha nahn la na guiha la na scuilipagh.*" That is, the windy or stormy day is not that on which the scollops should be cut. Scollops are osier twigs, sharpened at both ends, and inserted in the thatch, to bind it at the eve and rigging. The proverb inculcates preparation for future necessity.

followed his example ; but as he had saved something, he made up to Val Slevin's daughter, that had a fortune of twenty guineas, a cow and a heifer, with two good chaff beds and bedding.

"Soon after Tom's marriage, he comes to Larry one dav, and says, 'Larry, you and I are now going to face the world ; we're both young, healthy, and willing to work—so are our wives ; and it's bad if we can't make out bread for ourselves, I think.'

"'Thrue for you, Tom,' says Larry, 'and what's to hinder us? I only wish we had a farm, and you'd see we'd take good bread out of it : for my part there's not another *he* in the country I'd turn my back upon for managing a farm, if I had one.'

"'Well,' says the other, 'that's what I wanted to overhaul as we're together ; Squire Dickson's steward was telling me yesterday, as I was coming up from my father-in-law's, that his master has a farm of fourteen acres to set at the present time ; the one the Nultys held, that went last spring to America—'twould be a dacent little *take* between us.'

"'I know every inch of it,' says Larry, 'and good stron gland it is, but it was never well wrought ; the Nulty's weren't fit for it at all : for one of them didn't know how to folly a plough.—I'd engage to make that land turn out as good crops as ere a farm within ten miles of it.'

"'I know that, Larry,' says Tom, 'and Squire Dickson knows that no man could handle it to more advantage. Now if you join me in it, whatever means I have will be as much yours as mine ; there's two snug houses under the one roof, with outhouses and all, in good repair —and if Sally and Biddy will pull manfully along with us, I don't see, with the help of Almighty God, why we shouldn't get on decently, and soon be well and comfortable to live.'

"'Comfortable !' says Larry ; 'no, but wealthy itself, Tom : and let us *at* it at wanst ; Squire Dickson knows what I can do as well as any man in Europe ; and I'll engage won't be hard upon us for the first year or two ; our best plan is to go to-morrow, for fraid some other might get the foreway of us.'

"The Squire knew very well that two better boys weren't to be met with than the same M'Farlands, in the way of knowing how to manage land ; and although he had his doubts as to Larry's light and careless ways, yet he had good depindance out of the brother, and thought, on the whole, that they might do very well together.—Accordingly, he set them the farm at a reasonable rint, and in a short time they were both living on it, with their two wives. They divided the fourteen acres into aqual parts ; and for fraid there would be any grumbling between them about better or worse, Tom proposed that they should draw lots, which was agreed to by Larry ; but, indeed, there was very little difference in the two halves ; for Tom took care, by the way he divided them, that none of them should have any reason to complain. From the time they wint to live upon their farms, Tom was up early and down late, improving it—paid attention to nothing else ; axed every man's opinion as to what crop would be best for such a spot, and to tell the truth he found very few, if any, able to instruct him so well as

his own brother Larry. He was no such labourer, however, as Larry —but what he was short in, he made up by perseverance and care.

"In the coorse of two or three years you would hardly bleeve how he got on, and his wife was every bit equal to him. She spun the yarn for the linen that made their own shirts and sheeting, bought an odd pound of wool now and then when she could get it chape, and put it past till she had a stone or so; she would then sit down and spin it—get it wove and dressed; and before one would know anything about it, she'd have the making of a dacent comfortable coat for Tom, and a bit of heather-coloured drugget for her own gown, along with a piece of striped red and blue for a petticoat—all at very little cost.

"It wasn't so with Larry. In the beginning, to be sure, while the fit was on him, he did very well; only that he would go of an odd time to a dance; or of a market or fair day, when he'd see the people pass by, dressed in their best clothes, he'd take the notion, and set off with himself, telling Sally that he'd just go in for a couple of hours to see how the markets were going on.

"It's always an unpleasant thing for a body to go to a fair or market without anything in their pocket; accordingly if money was in the house, he'd take some of it with him, for fraid that any friend or acquaintance might thrate him, and then it would be a poor mane-spirited thing to take another man's thrate without giving one for it.—He'd seldom have any notion, though, of breaking in upon, or spinding the money, he only brought it to keep his pocket, jist to prevent him from being shamed, should he meet a friend.

"In the manetime, Sally, in his absence, would find herself lonely, and as she hadn't, maybe, seen her aunt for some time before, she'd lock the door, and go over to spind awhile with her; or to take a trip as far as her ould mistress's place to see the family. Many a thing people will have to say to one another about the pleasant times they had together, or several other subjects best known to themselves, of coorse. Larry would come home in her absence, and finding the door locked, would slip down to Squire Dickson's, to chat with the steward or gardiner, or with the sarvants in the kitchen.

"You all remimber Tom Hance, that kept the public-house at Tullyvernon cross-roads, a little above the Squire's—at laste, most of you do—and ould Wilty Rutledge, the piper, that spint his time between Tom's and the big house—God be good to Wilty!—it's himself was the droll man entirely: he died of aiting boiled banes, for a wager that the Squire laid on him agin ould Captain Flint, and dhrinking porter after them, till he was swelled like a ton—but the Squire berrid him at his own expense. Well, Larry's haunt, on finding Sally out when he came home, was either the Squire's kitchen, or Tom Hance's: and, as he was the *broth of a boy* at dancing, the sarvants, when he'd go down, would send for Wilty to Hance's, if he didn't happen to be with themselves at the time, and strike up a dance in the kitchen; and, along with all, maybe Larry would have a sup in his head.

"When Sally would come home, in her turn, she'd not find Larry before her; but Larry's custom was to go into Tom's wife, and say,

'Biddy, tell Sally, when she comes home, that I'm gone down awhile to the big house (or to Tom Hance's, as it might be), but I'll not be long.' Sally, after waiting awhile, would put on her cloak, and slip down to see what was keeping him. Of coorse, when finding the sport going on, and carrying a light heel at the dance herself, she'd throw off the cloak, and take a hand at it along with the rest. Larry and she would then go their ways home, find the fire out, light a sod of turf in Tom's, and feeling their own place very could and naked after the blazing comfortable fire they had left behind them, go to bed, both in very middling spirits entirely.

"Larry, at other times, would quit his work early in the evening, to go down towards the Squire's, bekase he had only to begin work *earlier* the next day to make it up. He'd meet the Squire himself, maybe, and after putting his hand to his hat, and getting a 'How do you do, Larry' from his honour, enter into discoorse with him about his honour's plan of stacking his corn.—Now, Larry was famous at this.

"'Who's to build your stacks this sason, your honour?'

"'Tim Dillon, Larry.'

"'Is it he, your honour?—he knows as much about building a stack of corn as Masther George here. He'll only botch them, sir, if you let him go about them.'

"'Yes; but what can I do, Larry?—he's the only man I have that I could trust them to.'

"'Then it's your honour needn't say that, anyhow; for rather than see them spoiled, I'd come down myself and put them up for you.'

"'Oh, I couldn't expect that, Larry.'

"'Why then, I'll do it, your honour; and you may expect me down in the morning at six o'clock, plase God.'

"Larry would keep his word, though his own corn was drop-ripe; and having once undertaken the job, he couldn't give it up, till he'd finish it off dacently. In the meantime his own crop would go to destruction; sometimes a windy day would come, and not leave him every tenth grain; he'd then get someone to cut it down for him—*he* had to go to the big house, to build the master's corn; he was then all bustle—a great man entirely—there was *non* such—would be up with the first light, ordering and commanding, and directing the Squire's labourers, as if he was the king of the castle. Maybe, 'tis after he'd come from the big house, that he'd collect a few of the neighbours, and get a couple of cars and horses from the Squire, you see, to bring home his own oats to the hagyard with moonlight, after the dews would begin to fall; and in a week afterwards every stack would be heated, and all in a reek of froth and smoke. It's not asy to do anything in a hurry, and especially it's not asy to build a corn-stack after night, when a man cannot see how it goes on; so 'twas no wonder if Larry's stacks were supporting one another the next day—one laning north and another south.

"But along with this, Larry and Sally were great people for going to the dances that Hance used to have at the crass-roads, bekase he wished to put money into his own pockets; and if a neighbour died

they were sure to be the first at the wake-house—for Sally was a great hand at washing down a corpse—and they would be the last home from the berril—for, you know, they couldn't but be axed in to the dhrinking after the friends would lave the churchyard, to take a sup to raise their spirits, and drown sorrow, for grief is always drouthy.

"When the races, too, would come, they would be sure not to miss them; and if you'd go into a tint, it's odds but you'd find them among a knot of acquaintances, dhrinking and dancing, as if the world was no trouble to them. They were, indeed, the best nathured couple in Europe; they would lend you a spade or a hook in potato time or harvest, out of pure kindness, though their own corn that was drop-ripe should be uncut, or their potatoes, that were a tramping every day with their own cows, or those of the neighbours, should be undug—all for fraid of being thought unneighbourly.

"In this way they went on for some years, not altogether so bad but that they were able just to keep the house over their heads. They had a small family of three children on their hands, and every likelihood of having enough of them.—Whenever they got a young one christened, they'd be sure to have a whole lot of the neighbours at it; and surely some of the young ladies, or Master George, or John, or Frederick, from the big house, should stand gossip, and have the child called after them. They then should have tay enough to sarve them, and loaf-bread and punch; and though Larry should sell a sack of seed oats, or seed potatoes, to get it, no doubt but there should be a bottle of wine, to thrate the young ladies or gintlemen.

"When their children grew up, little care was taken of them, bekase their parents minded other people's business more nor their own. They were always in the greatest poverty and distress; for Larry would be killing time about the Squire's, or doing some handy job for a neighbour who could get no other man to do it. They now fell behind entirely in the rint, and Larry got many hints from the Squire, that if he didn't pay more attention to his business, he must look after his arrears, or as much of it as he could make up from the cattle and the crop. Larry promised well, as far as words went, and, no doubt, hoped to be able to perform; but he hadn't steadiness to go through with a thing. Thruth's best;—you see, both himself and his wife neglected their business in the beginning, so that everything went at sixes and sevens. They then found themselves uncomfortable at their own hearth, and had no heart to labour; so that what would make a careful person work their fingers to the stumps to get out of poverty, only prevented *them* from working at all, or *druv* them to work for those that had more comfort, and could give them a better male's mate.

"Their tempers, now, soon began to get sour: Larry thought, bekase Sally wasn't as careful as she ought to be, that if he had taken any other young woman to his wife, he wouldn't be as he was;—*she* thought the very same thing of Larry. 'If he was like another,' she would say to his brother, 'that would be up airly and late at his own business, I would have spirits to work, by rason it would cheer my

heart to see our little farm looking as warm and comfortable as another's; but, *fareer gairh*,[1] that's not the case, nor likely to be so, for he spinds his time from one place to another, working for them that laughs at him for his pains; but he'd rather go to his neck in wather than lay down a hand for himself, except when he can't help it.'

"Larry, again, had *his* complaint.—'Sally's a lazy trollop,' he would say to his brother's wife, 'that never does one hand's turn that she can help, but sits over the fire from morning till night, making bird's nests in the ashes with her yallow heels, or going about from one neighbour's house to another, gosthering and palavering about what doesn't consarn her, instead of minding the house. How can I have heart to work, when I come in—expecting to find my dinner boiled; but, instead of that, get her sitting upon her hunkers on the hearth-stone, blowing at two or three green sticks with her apron, the pot hanging on the crook, without even the *white horses on it*.[2] She never puts a stitch in my clothes, nor in the childher's clothes, nor in her own, but lets them go to rags at once—the divil's luck to her! I wish I had never met with her, or that I had married a sober girl, that wasn't fond of dress and dancing. If she was a good sarvant, it was only bekase she liked to have a good name; for when she got a house and place of her own, see how she turned out.'

"From less to more, they went on squabbling and fighting, until at last you might see Sally one time with a black eye or a cut head, or another time going off with herself, crying, up to Tom Hance's or some other neighbour's house, to sit down and give a history of the *ruction* that he and she had on the head of some thrifle or another that wasn't worth naming. Their childher were shows, running about without a single stitch upon them, except ould coats that some of the sarvants from the big house would throw them. In these they'd go sailing about, with the long skirts trailing on the ground behind them; and sometimes Larry himself would be mane enough to take the coat from the *gorsoon*, and ware it himself. As for giving them any schooling, 'twas what they never thought of; but even if they were inclined to it, there was no school in the neighbourhood to send them to.

"It's a thrue saying, that as the ould cock crows, the young one larns; and this was thrue here, for the childher fought one another like so many divils, and swore like Trojans—Larry, along with everything else, when he was a Brine-oge, thought it was a manly thing to be a great swearer; and the childher, when they got able to swear, warn't worse nor their father. At first, when any of the little souls would thry at an oath, Larry would break his heart laughing at them; and so, from one thing to another, they got quite hardened in it,

[1] Bitter misfortune.

[2] The *white horses* are large bubbles produced by the extrication of air, which rises in white bubbles to the surface when the potatoes are beginning to boil: so that when the first symptoms of boiling commence, it is a usual phrase to say—the *white horses are on the pot*, sometimes the *white friars*.

without being any way checked in wickedness. Things at last drew on to a bad state, entirely.—Larry and Sally were now as ragged as Dives and Lazarus, and their childher the same. It was no strange sight, in summer, to see the young ones marching about the street as bare as my hand, with scarce a blessed stitch upon them that ever was seen, they dirt and ashes to the eyes, waddling after their uncle Tom's geese and ducks, through the green dub of rotten water that lay before their own door, just beside the dunghill: or the bigger ones running after the Squire's labourers, when bringing home the corn or the hay, wanting to get a ride as they went back with the empty cars.

"Larry and Sally would never be let into the Squire's kitchen now, to eat or drink, or spend an evening with the sarvants; he might go out and in to his meal's mate along with the rest of the labourers, but there was no *grah*[1] for him. Sally would go down with her jug to get some butter-milk, and have to stand among a set of beggars and cotters, she as ragged and as poor as any of them, for she wouldn't be let into the kitchen till her turn came, no more nor another, for the sarvants would turn up their noses with the greatest disdain possible at them both.

"It is hard to tell whether the inside or the outside of their house was worse;—within, it would almost turn your stomach to look at it—the flure was all dirt, for how could it be any other way, when at the end of every male the *schrahag*[2] would be emptied down on it, and the pigs that were whining and grunting about the door, would brake into the hape of praty-skins that Sally would there throw down for them.—You might reel Larry's shirt, or make a surveyor's chain of it; for, *bad cess*[3] to me, but I bleeve it would reach from this to the rath. The blanket was in tatthers, and, like the shirt, would go round the house: their straw beds were stocked with the *black militia*—the childher's heads were garrisoned with *Scotch greys*, and their heels and heads ornamented with all description of kives.—There wor only two stools in all the house, and a hassock of straw for the young child, and one of the stools wanted a leg, so that it was dangerous for a stranger to sit down upon it, except he knew of this failing. The flure was worn into large holes, that were mostly filled with slop, where the childher used to dabble about, and amuse themselves by sailing egg-shells upon them, with bits of boiled praties in them, by way of a little faste. The dresser was as black as dirt could make it, and had on it only two or three wooden dishes, clasped with tin, and noggins without hoops, a beetle, and some crockery. There was an ould chest to hold their male, but it wanted the hinges; and the childher, when they'd get the mother out, would mix a sup of male and wather in a noggin, and stuff themselves with it, raw and all, for they were almost starved.

"Then, as the byre had never been kept in repair, the roof fell in,

[1] Kindly welcome.
[2] A flat wicker basket, off which the potatoes are eaten.
[3] Bad success.

and the cow and pig had to stand in one end of the dwelling-house; and, except Larry did it, whatever dirt the same cow and pig, and the childher to the back of that, were the occasion of, might stand there till Saturday night, when, for dacency's sake, Sally herself would take a shovel, and out with it upon the hape that was beside the dub before the door. If a wet day came, there wasn't a spot you could stand in for *down-rain;* and, wet or dry, Sally, Larry, and the childher were spotted like trouts with the soot-dhrops, made by the damp of the roof and the smoke. The house on the outside was all in ridges of black dirt, where the thatch had rotted, or covered over with chicken weed, or blind oats; but in the middle of all this misery they had a horseshoe nailed over the door-head for good luck.

"You know that, in telling this story, I needn't mintion everything just as it happened, laying down year after year, or day and date; so you may suppose, as I go on, that all this went forward in the coorse of time. They didn't get bad of a sudden, but by degrees, neglecting one thing after another, until they found themselves in the state I'm relating to you—then struggling and struggling, but never taking the right way to mend.

"But where's the use in saying much more about it?—things couldn't stand—they were terribly in arrears; but the landlord was a good kind of man, and, for the sake of the poor childher, didn't wish to turn them on the wide world, without house or shelter, bit or sup. Larry, too, had been, and still was, so ready to do difficult and nice jobs for him, and would resave no payment, that he couldn't think of taking his only cow from him, or prevent him from raising a bit of oats or a plat of potatoes, every year, out of the farm.—The farm itself was all run to waste by this time, and had a miserable look about it—sometimes you might see a piece of a field that had been ploughed, all overgrown with grass, because it had never been sowed or set with anything. The slaps were all broken down, or had only a piece of an ould beam, a thorn bush, or crazy car lying acrass, to keep the cattle out of them. His bit of corn was all eat away and cropped here and there by the cows, and his potatoes rooted up by the pigs.—The garden, indeed, had a few cabbages and a ridge of early potatoes, but these were so choked with burdocks and nettles that you could hardly see them.

I tould you before that they led the divil's life, and that was nothing but God's truth; and according as they got into greater poverty, it was worse. A day couldn't pass without a fight; if they'd be at their breakfast, maybe he'd make a potato hop off her skull, and she'd give him the contents of her noggin of buttermilk about the eyes; then he'd *flake* her, and the childher would be in an uproar, crying out, 'Oh, daddy, daddy, don't kill my mammy!' When this would be over, he'd go off with himself to do something for the Squire, and would sing and laugh so pleasant that you'd think he was the best tempered man alive; and so he was, until neglecting his business, and minding dances, and fairs, and drink, destroyed him.

"It's the maxim of the world, that when a man is down, down with him; but when a man goes down through his own fault, he finds very

little mercy from anyone. Larry might go to fifty fairs before he'd meet anyone now to thrate him : instead of that, when he'd make up to them, they'd turn away, or give him the *cowld shoulder*.[1] But that wouldn't satisfy him ; for if he went to buy a slip of a pig, or a pair of brogues, and met an ould acquaintance that had got well to do in the world, he should bring him in, and give him a dram, merely to let the other see that he was still *able* to do it, then ; when they'd sit down, one dram would bring on another from Larry, till the price of the pig or the brogues would be spint, and he'd go home again as he came, sure to have another battle with Sally.

" In this way things went on, when one day that Larry was preparing to sell some oats, a son of Nicholas Roe Sheridan's of the Broad-bog came into him. 'Good morning, Larry,' says he ; 'Good morrow kindly, Art,' says Larry—'how are you, ma bouchal?'

"'Why, I've no rason to complain, thank God and you,' says the other ; how *is* yourself?'

"'Well, thank you, Art ; how is the family?'

"'Faix, all stout, except my father, that has got a touch of the tooth-ach. When did you hear from the Slevins?'

"'Sally was down on Thursday last, and they're all well, your sowl.'

"'Where's Sally now?'

"'She's just gone down to the big house for a pitcher of butter-milk ; our cow won't calve these three weeks to come, and she gets a sup of kitchen for the childher till then : won't you take a sate, Art ; but you had better have a care for yourself, for that stool wants a leg.'

"'I didn't care she was within, for I brought a sup of my own stuff in my pocket,' said Art.

"'Here, Hurrish (he was called Horatio afther one of the Square's sons), fly down to the Square's, and see what's keeping your mother ; the divil's no match for her at staying out with herself, wanst she's from under the roof.'

"'Let Dick go,' says the little fellow, 'he's betther able to go nor I am ; he has got a coat on him.'

"'Go yourself, when I bid you,' says the father.

"'Let *him* go,' says Hurrish, 'you have no right to bid me to go, when he has a coat upon him ; you promised to ax one for me from Masther Francis, and you didn't do it ; so the divil a toe I'll budge to-day,' says he, getting betune the father and the door.

"'Well, wait,' says Larry, 'faix, only the strange man's to the fore, and I don't like to raise a hubbub, I'd *pay* you for making me such an answer. Dick, agra, will *you* run down, like a good bouchal, to the big house, and tell your mother to come home, that there's a strange man here wants her.'

"''Twas Hurrish you bid,' says Dick—'and make *him :* that's the way he always thrates you, and does nothing that you bid him.'

[1] Cool reception.

"'But you know, Dick,' says the father,' 'that he hasn't a stitch to his back, and the crathur doesn't like to go out in the cowld and he so naked.'

"'Well, you bid him go,' says Dick, 'and let him; the sorra a yard I'll go—the skin-burnt spalpeen, that's always the way with him; whatever he's bid to do, he throws it on me, bekase, indeed, he has no coat; but he'll folly Masther Thomas or Masther Francis through sleet and snow up the mountains, when they're fowling or tracing; he doesn't care about a coat *then*.'

"'Hurrish, *you* must go down for your mother when I bid you'—says the weak man, turning again to the other boy.

"'I'll not,' says the little fellow; 'send Dick.'

"Larry said no more, but, laying down the child he had in his hands, upon the flure, makes at him; the lad, however, had the door of him, and was off beyant his reach like a shot. He then turned into the house, and meeting Dick, felled him with a blow of his fist at the dresser. 'Tundher-an-ages, Larry,' says Art, 'what has come over you at all at all? to knock down the gorsoon with such a blow! couldn't you take a rod or a switch to him—*Dher maunhim*, man, but I bleeve you've killed him outright,' says he, lifting the boy, and striving to bring him to life. Just at this minnit Sally came in.

"'Arrah, *sweet bad-luck to you*, you lazy vagabond you,' says Larry, 'what kept you away till this hour?'

"'The devil send you news, you nager you,' says Sally, 'what kept me—could I make the people churn sooner than they wished or were ready?'

"'Ho, by my song, I'll flake you as soon as the dacent young man leaves the house,' says Larry to her, aside.

"'You'll flake me, is it?' says Sally, speaking out loud—'in troth, that's no new thing for you to do, anyhow.'

"'Spake asy, you had betther.' 'No, in troth, won't I spake asy; I've spoken asy too long, Larry, but the devil a taste of me will bear what I've suffered from you any longer, you mane-spirited blackguard you; for he is nothing else that would *rise* his hand to a woman, especially to one in my condition,' and she put her gown tail to her eyes. When she came in, Art turned his back to her, for fraid she'd see the state the gorsoon was in—but now she noticed it—'Oh murdher, murdher,' says she clapping her hands, and running over to him, what has happened my child: 'oh! murdher, murdher, this is *your* work, murdherer!' says she to Larry. 'Oh, you villain, are you bent on murdhering all of us—are you bent on destroying us out o' the face! Oh, wurrah sthrew! wurrah sthrew! what'll become of us! Dick, agra,' says she, crying, 'Dick, acushla ma chree, don't you hear me spaking to you?—don't you hear your poor broken-hearted mother spaking to you? Oh! wurrah! wurrah! amn't I the heart-brokenest crathur that's alive this day, to see the likes of such doings! but I knew it would come to this! My sowl to glory, but my child's murthered by that man standing there!—by his own father—his own father! Which of us will you murther next, you villain!'

" 'For heaven's sake, Sally,' says Art, 'don't exaggerate him more nor he is ; the boy is only stunned—see, he's coming to : Dick, ma bouchal, rouse yourself—that's a man : but he's well enough—that's it, *alannah :*[1] here, take a slug out of this bottle, and it'll set all right —or, stop, have you a glass within, Sally ?' 'Och, musha, not a glass is under the roof wid me,' says Sally ; 'the last we had was broke the night Barney was christened, and we hadn't one since—but I'll get you an egg-shell.'[2] 'It'll do as well as the best,' says Art. And to make a long story short, they sat down, and drank the bottle of whisky among them.—Larry and Sally made it up, and were as great friends as ever ; and Dick was made drunk for the bating he got from his father.

"What Art wanted was to buy some oats that Larry had to sell, to run in a private still, up in the mountains, of coorse, where every still is kept. Sure enough, Larry sould him the oats, and was to bring them up to the still-house the next night after dark. According to appointment, Art came a short time after night-fall, with two or three young boys along with him. The corn was sacked and put on the horses; but before that was done, they had a dhrop, for Art's pocket and the bottle were old acquaintainces. They all then sat down in Larry's, or, at laste, as many as there were seats for, and fell to it. Larry, however, seemed to be in better humour this night, and more affectionate with Sally and the childher : he'd often look at them, and appear to feel as if *something was over him ;* but no one observed that till afterwards. Sally herself seemed kinder to him, and even went over and sat beside him on the stool, and putting her arm about his neck, kissed him in a joking way, wishing to make up, too, for what Art saw the night before—poor thing—but still as if it wasn't *all* a joke, for at times she looked sorrowful. Larry, too, got his arm about her, and looked often and often on her and the childher, in a way that he wasn't used to do, until the tears fairly came into his eyes.

"'Sally, avourneen,' says he, looking at her, 'I saw you when you had another look from what you have this night ; when it wasn't asy to follow you *in* the parish or *out* of it ;' and when he said this he could hardly spake.

" 'Whisht, Larry, acushla,' says she, 'don't be spaking that-away—sure we may do very well yet, plase God : I know, Larry, there was a great dale of it—maybe, indeed, it was all—*my* fault ; for I wasn't to you, in the way of care and kindness, what I ought to be.'

" 'Well, well, aroon,' says Larry, 'say no more ; you might have been all that, only it was my fault : but where's Dick, that I struck so terribly last night ? Dick, come over to me, agra—come over Dick, and sit down here beside me. Arrah, here, Art, ma bouchal, will you fill this egg-shell for him ?—Poor gorsoon ! God knows, Dick, you get

[1] My child.

[2] The ready wit of the Irish is astonishing. It often happens that they have whisky when neither glasses nor cups are at hand—in which case they are never at a loss. I have seen them use not only egg shells, but pistol barrels, tobacco boxes, and scooped potatoes, in extreme cases.

far from fair play, acushla—far from the ating and drinking that other people's childher get, that hasn't as good a skin to put it in as you, alannah! Kiss me, Dick, acushla—and God knows your face is pale, and that's not with good feeding, anyhow: Dick, agra, I'm sorry for what I done to you last night; forgive your father, Dick, for I think that my heart's breaking, acushla, and that you won't have me long with you.'

"Poor Dick, who was naturally a warm-hearted affectionate gorsoon, kissed his father, and cried bitterly. Sally herself, seeing Larry so sorry for what he had done, sobbed as if she would drop on the spot; but the rest began, and betwixt scoulding and cheering him up, all was as well as ever. Still Larry seemed as if there was something entirely very strange the matter with him, for as he was going out, he kissed all the childher, one after another; and even went over to the young baby that was asleep in the little cradle of boords, that he himself had made for it, and kissed it two or three times, asily, for fraid of wakening it. He then met Sally at the door, and catching her hand when none of the rest saw him, squeezed it, and gave her a kiss, saying, 'Sally, darling!' says he.

"'What ails you, Larry, asthore?' says Sally.

"'I don't know,' says he, 'nothing, I bleeve—but, Sally, acushla, I have trated you badly all along; I forgot, avourneen, how I loved you *once*, and now it breaks my heart that I have used you so ill.' 'Larry,' she answered, 'don't be talking that-a-way, bekase you make me sorrowful and unasy—don't acushla: God above me knows I forgive you it all. Don't stay long,' says she, 'and I'll borry a lock of meal from Biddy, till we get home our own *meldhre*[1] and I'll have a dish of stirabout ready to make for you when you come home. Sure, Larry, who'd forgive you, if I, your own wife, wouldn't? But it's I that wants it from you, Larry, and in the presence of God, and ourselves, I now beg your pardon, and ax your forgiveness for all the sin I done to you.' She dropped on her knees, and cried bitterly; but he raised her up, himself a choking at the time, and as the poor crathur got to h[illegible]t, she laid herself on his breast, and sobbed out, for she couldn't h[illegible]t. They then went away, though Larry, to tell the thruth, wouldn't [illegible]ve gone with them at all, only that the sacks were borried fro[illegible]is brother, and he had to bring them home, in regard of Tom wanting them the very next day.

"The night was as dark as pitch, so dark, faiks, that they had to get long pieces of bog fir, which they lit, and held in their hands, like the lights that Ned there says the lamplighters have in Dublin, to light the lamps with.

At last, with a good dale of trouble, they got to the still-house; and, as they had all taken a drop before, you may be sure they were better inclined to take another sup now. They accordingly sat down about the fine rousing fire that was under the still, and had a right good jorum of strong whisky that never seen a drop of water. They all

[1] Any quantity of meal, ground on one occasion, a kiln cast, or as much as the kiln will dry at once.

were in very good spirits, not thinking of to-morrow, and caring at the time very little about the world as it went.

"When the night was far advanced, they thought of moving home; however, by that time they weren't able to stand: but it's one curse of being drunk, that a man doesn't know what he's about for the time, except some few like that poaching ould fellow, Billy M'Kinney, that's as cunning when he's drunk as when he's sober; otherwise they would not have ventured out in the clouds of the night, when it was so dark and severe, and they in such a state.

"At last they staggered away together, for their road lay for a good distance in the same direction. The others got on, and reached home as well as they could; but although Sally borried the dish of male from her sister-in-law, to have a warm pot of stirabout for Larry, and sat up till the night was more than half gone, waiting for him, yet no Larry made his appearance. The childher, too, all sat up, hoping he'd come home, before they'd fall asleep and miss the supper; at last the crathurs after running about, began to get sleepy, and one head would fall this-a-way and another that-a-way; so Sally thought it hard to let them go without getting their share, and accordingly she put down the pot on a bright fire, and made a good lot of stirabout for them, covering up Larry's share in a red earthen dish before the fire.

"This roused them a little, and they sat about the hearth with their mother, keeping her company with their little chat, till their father would come back.

"The night, for some time before this, got very stormy entirely. The wind *ris*, and the rain fell as if it came out of *methers*.[1] The house was very cowld, and the door was bad; for the wind came in very strong under the foot of it, where the ducks and hens, and the pig when it was little, used to squeeze themselves in, when the family was absent, or afther they went to bed. The wind now came whistling under it; and the ould hat and rags that stopped up the windies, were blown out half-a-dozen times with such force that the ashes were carried away almost from the hearth. Sally got very low-spirited on hearing the storm whistling so sorrowfully through the house, for she was afeard that Larry might be out on the dark moors under it: and how any living soul could bear it, she didn't know. The talk of the childher, too, made her worse; for they were debating among themselves, the crathurs, about what he had better do under the tempest—whether he ought to take the sheltry side of a hillock, or get into a long heath bush, or under the ledge of a rock or tree, if he could meet such a thing.

"In the mane time, terrible blasts would come over and through the house, making the ribs crack so, that you would think the roof would be taken away at wanst. The fire was now getting low, and Sally had no more turf in the house; so that the childher crouched closer and closer about it—their poor hungry-looking pale faces, made paler with fear that the house might come down upon them, or be stripped, and their father from home—and with worse fear that some-

[1] An old Irish drinking vessel.

thing might happen him under such a tempest of wind and rain as it blew. Indeed it was a pitiful sight to see the ragged crathurs drawing in a ring nearer and nearer the dying fire; and their poor, naked, half-starved mother, sitting with her youngest infant lying between her knees and her breast: for the bed was too cowld to put it into it, without being kept warm by the heat of them that it used to sleep with."

"Musha, God help her and them," says Ned, "I wish they were here beside me on this comfortable hob, this minite; I'd fight Nancy to get a fogmeal for them, anyway—a body can't but pity them, afther all!"

"You'd fight Nancy!" said Nancy herself—"maybe Nancy would be as willing to do something for the crathurs as you would—I like everybody that's able to pay for what they get! but we ought to have some bowels in us for all that. You'd fight Nancy, indeed!"

"Well," continued the narrator, "there they sat, with cowld and fear in their pale faces, shivering over the remains of the fire, for it was now nearly out, and thinking, as the deadly blast would drive through the creeking ould door and the halfstuffed windies, of what their father would do under such a terrible night. Poor Sally, sad and sorrowful, was thinking of all their ould quarrels, and taking the blame all to herself for not being more attentive to her business, and more kind to Larry; and when she thought of the way she thrated him, and the ill-tongue she used to give him, the tears began to roll from her eyes, and she rocked herself from side to side, sobbing as if her heart would brake. When the childher saw her wiping her eyes with the corner of the little handkerchief that she had about her neck, they began to cry along with her. At last she thought, as it was now so late, that it would be folly to sit up any longer; she hoped, too, that he might have thought of going into some neighbour's house on his way, to take shelter, and with these thoughts she raked the *grees-hough* over the fire, and after putting the childher in their little straw nest, and spreading their own rags over them, she and the young one went to bed, although she couldn't sleep at all at all, for thinking of Larry.

"There she lay, trembling under the light cover of the bed-clothes, listening to the dreadful night in it, so lonely that the very noise of the cow, in the other corner, chewing her cud, in the silence of a short calm, was a great relief to her. It was a long time before she could get a wink of sleep, for there was some uncommon weight upon her that she couldn't account for by any chance; but after she had been lying for about half-an-hour, she heard something that almost fairly knocked her up. It was the voice of a woman, crying and wailing in the greatest distress, as if all belonging to her were *under-boord*.[1]

[1] This phrase alludes to the manner in which the dead bodies in several parts of Ireland are laid out, viz., under a long deal board, over which is spread a clean sheet so that no parts of the corpse is visible. It is much more becoming than the other manner, in which the countenance of the dead is exposed to view.

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"When Sally heard it first, she thought it was nothing but the whistling of the wind; but it soon came again, more sorrowful than before, and as the storm rose, it rose upon the blast along with it, so strange and mournfully, that she never before heard the like of it. 'The Lord be about us,' says she to herself, 'what can that be at all! —or who is it? for it's not Nelly,' maning her sister-in-law. Again she listened, and there it was, sobbing and sighing in the greatest grief, and she thought she heard it louder than ever, only that this time it seemed to name whomever it was lamenting. Sally now got up and put her ear to the door, *to see if she could hear* what it said. At this time the wind got calmer, and the voice also got lower; but although it was still sorrowful, she never heard any living Christian's voice so sweet, and what was very odd, it fell in fits, exactly as the storm sunk, and rose as it blew louder.

"When she put her ear to the chink of the door she heard the words repeated, no doubt of it, only couldn't be quite sure, as they weren't very plain; but as far as she could make any sense out of them, she thought that it said—'Oh, Larry M'Farland!—Larry M'Farland!—Larry M'Farland!' Sally's hair stood on end when she heard this; but on listening again, she thought it was her own name instead of Larry's that it repated. Still she wasn't sure, for the words wern't plain, and all she could think was that they resembled her own name or Larry's, more nor any other words she knew. At last, as the wind fell again, it melted away, weeping most sorrowfully, but so sweetly, that the likes of it was never heard. Sally then went to bed, and the poor woman was so harished with one thing or another, that at last she fell asleep."

"'Twas the *Banshee*," says Shane Fadh.

"Indeed it was nothing else than that same," replied M'Roarkin.

"I wonder Sally didn't think of that," said Nancy—"sure she might know that no living crathur would be out lamenting under such a night as that was."

"She did think of that," said Tom; "but as no Banshee ever followed *her own*[1] family, she didn't suppose that it could be such a thing; but she forgot that it might follow Larry's. I, myself, heard his brother Tom say, afterwards, that a Banshee used always to be heard before any of them died."

"Did his brother hear it?" Ned inquired.

"He did," said Tom; "and his wife along with him, and knew, at once, that some death would happen in the family—but it wasn't long till he suspected who it came for; for, as he was going to bed that night, on looking toardst his own hearth, he thought he saw his brother standing at the fire, with a very sorrowful face upon him. 'Why, Larry,' says he, 'how did you get in, after me barring the door?—or did you turn back from helping them with the corn? You, surely, hadn't time to go half the way since.' Larry, however, made him no answer; and, on looking for him again, there was no Larry there for

[1] The Banshee in Ireland is, or rather was, said to follow only particular families – principally the old Milesians.

him. 'Nelly,' says he to his wife, 'did you see any sight of Larry since he went to the still-house?' 'Arrah, no indeed, Tom,' says she; 'what's coming over you to spake to the man that's near Drumfarrar by this time?' 'God keep him from harm!' said Tom;—'poor fellow, I wish nothing ill may happen him this night! I'm afeard, Nelly, that I saw his *fetch*;[1] and if I did, he hasn't long to live; for when one's fetch is seen at this time of night, their lase of life, let them be sick or in health, is always short.' 'Hut, Tom aroon!' says Nelly, 'it was the shadow of the jamb or yourself you saw in the light of the candle, or the shadow of the bed-post.'

"The next morning they were all up, hoping that he would drop in to them. Sally got a creel of turf, notwithstanding her condition, and put down a good fire to warm him; but the morning passed, and no sign of him. She now got very unasy, and mintioned to his brother what she felt, and Tom went up to the still-house to know if he was there, or to try if he could get any tidings of him. But, by the laws, when he heard that he had left that for home the night before, and he in a state of liquor, putting this, and what he had heard and seen in his house together, Tom knew that something must have happened him. He went home again, and on his way had his eye about him, thinking that it would be no miracle, if he'd meet him lying headforemost in a ditch; however, he did not, but went on, expecting to find him at home before him.

"In the manetime, the neighbours had been all raised to search for him; and, indeed, the hills were alive with people. It was the second day after, that Sally was standing, looking out at her own door toardst the mountains, expecting that every man with a blue coat upon him might be Larry, when she saw a crowd of people coming down the hills. Her heart leaped to her mouth, and she sent Dick, the eldest of the sons, to meet them, and run back with word to her if he was among them. Dick went away; but he hadn't gone far when he met his uncle Tom, coming on before the rest.

"'Uncle,' says Dick, 'did you get my father, for I must fly back with word to my mother, like lightning.'

"'Come here, Dick,' says Tom; 'God help you, my poor bouchal!—Come here, and walk alongside of me, for you can't go back to your mother, till *I* see her first—God help you, my poor bouchal, it's you that's to be pitied, this blessed and sorrowful day;' and the poor fellow could by no means keep in the tears. But he was saved the trouble of breaking the dismal tidings to poor Sally; for as she stood watching the crowd, she saw a door carried upon their shoulders, with something like a man stretched upon it. She turned in, feeling as if a bullet had gone through her head, and sat down with her back to the door, for fraid she might see the thruth, for she couldn't be *quite* sure, they were at such a distance. At last she ventured to take another look out, for she couldn't bear what she felt within her, and just as she rose and came to the door, the first thing she saw coming

[1] This in the North of Ireland is called wraith, as in Scotland. I have adopted the other as more national.

down the hill, a little above the house, was the body of her husband stretched on a door—dead. At that minute, her brother-in-law, Tom, just entered, in time to prevent her and the child she had in her arms from falling on the flure. She had seen enough, God help her !—for she took labour that instant, and, in about two hours afterwards, was stretched a corpse beside her husband, with her heart-broken and desolate orphans in an uproar of outher misery about them. That was the end of Larry M'Farland and Sally Lowry ; two that might have done well in the world, had they taken care of themselves, avoided fairs and markets—except when they had business there—not giving themselves idle fashions, by drinking, or going to dances, and wrought as well for themselves as they did for others."

"But how did he lose his life, at all at all ?" inquired Nancy.

"Why, they found his hat in a bog hole upon the water, and on searching the hole itself, poor Larry was fished up from the bottom of it."

"Well, that's a murdhering sorrowful story," said Shane Fadh : "but you won't be after passing that on us for the wake, anyhow."

"Well, you must learn patience, Shane," said the narrator, "for you know patience is a virtue."

"I'll warrant you that *Tom* and *his wife* made a better hand of themselves," said Alick M'Kinley, "than Larry and Sally did."

"Ah ! I wouldn't fear, Alick," said Tom, "but you would come at the thruth—'tis you that may say they did ; there wasn't two in the parish more comfortable than the same two, at the very time that Larry and Sally came by their deaths. It would do you good to look at their hagyard—the corn stacks were so nately roped and trimmed, and the walls so well made up, that a bird could scarcely get into it. Their barn and byre, too, and dwelling-house, were all comfortably thatched, and the windies all glazed, with not a broken pane in them. Altogether, they had come on wondherfully ; sould a good dale of male and praties every year ; so that in a short time they were able to lay by a little money to help to fortune off their little girls, that were growing up fine colleens, all out."

"And you may add, I suppose," said Andy Morrow, "that they lost no time going to fairs or dances, or other foolish divarsions. I'll engage they never were at a dance in the squire's kitchen ; that they never went about losing their time working for others, when their own business was going at sixes and sevens, for want of hands ; nor spent their money drinking and thrating a parcel of friends that only laughed at them for their pains ; and wouldn't, may be, put one foot past the other to sarve them ; nor never fought and abused one another for what they both were guilty of."

"Well," said Tom ; "you have saved me some trouble, Mr. Morrow ; for you just said to a hair what they were. But I musn't forget to mintion one thing that I saw the morning of the berril. We were about a dozen of neighbours, talking in the street, just before the door ; both the hagyards were forninst us—Tom's snug and nate—but Charley Lawder had to go over from where he stood to drive the pig

out of poor Larry's. There was one of the stacks with the side out of it just as he had drawn away the sheaves from time to time; for the stack leaned to one side, and he pulled sheaves out of the other side to keep it straight. Now, Mr. Morrow, wasn't he an unfortunate man? for whoever would go down to Squire Dickson's hagyard would see the same Larry's handiwork so beautiful and elegant, though his own was in such *brutheen*.[1] Even his barn went to wrack: and he was obliged to thrash his oats in the open air when there would be a frost, and he used to lose one-third of it; and if there came a thaw, 'twould almost brake the crathur."

"God knows," says Nancy, looking over at Ned significantly, "and Larry's not alone in neglecting his business; that is, if sartin people were allowed to take their own way; but the truth of it is that he met with a bad *woman*.[2] If he had a careful, sober, industrious wife of his own, that would take care of the house and place—(*Biddy, will you hand me over that other clew out of the windy stool there, till I finish this stocking for Ned*)—the story would have another ending, anyhow."

"In throth," said Tom, "that's no more than thruth, Nancy—but he had not, and everything went to the bad with him entirely."

"It's a thousand pities he had'nt yourself, Nancy," said Alick grinning; "if he had, I haven't the laste doubt at all, but he'd die worth money."

"Go on, Alick—go on, avick; I will give you lave to have your joke, any way; for it's you that's the patthern to any man that would wish to thrive in the world."

"If Ned dies, Nancy, I don't know a woman I'd prefer; I'm now a *widdy*[3] these five years; and I feel, somehow, particularly since I began to spend my evenings here, that I'm disremembering very much the old proverb—'A burnt child dreaps the fire.'"

"Thank you, Alick; you think I swally that: but as for Ned, the never a fear of him; except that an increasing stomach is a sign of something; or what's the best chance of all, Alick, for you and me, that he should meet Larry's fate in some of his drunken fits."

"Now, Nancy," says Ned, "there's no use in talking that-a-way: it's only last Thursday, Mr. Morrow, that, in presence of her own brother, Jem Connolly, the breeches-maker, and Billy M'Kinny, there, I put my two five fingers acrass, and swore solemnly by them five crosses, that, *except my mind changed*, I'd never drink more nor one half pint of spirits and three pints of porther in a day."

"Oh, hould your tongue, Ned—hould your tongue, and don't make me spake," said Nancy. "God help you! many a time you've put the same fingers acrass, and many a time your mind has changed; but I'll say no more now—wait till we see how you'll keep it."

[1] Brutheen is potato champed with butter. Anything in a loose, broken, and irregular state is said to be in *brutheen*—that is, disorder andconfusion.

[2] Wife.

The peasantry of a great portion of Ireland use the word as applicable to both sexes.

"Healths apiece, your sowls," said Ned, winking at the company.

"Well, Tom," said Andy Morrow, "about the wake?"

"Och, och! that was the merry wake, Mr. Morrow. *From that day to this I remarked, that, living or dead, them that won't respect themselves, or take care of their families, won't be respected:* and sure enough, I saw full proof of that same at poor Larry's wake. Many a time afterwards I pitied the childher, for if they had seen better, they wouldn't turn out as they did—all but the two youngest, that their uncle took to himself, and reared afterwards; but they had no one to look afther them, and how could it be expected, from what they seen, that good could come of them? Squire Dickson gave Tom the other seven acres, although he could have got a higher rint from others; but he was an industrious man that desarved encouragement, and he got it."

"I suppose Tom was at the expense of Larry's berrin, as well as of his marriage?" said Alick.

"In throth, and he was," said Tom, "although he didn't desarve it from him when he was alive;[1] seeing he neglected many a good advice that Tom and his dacent woman of a wife often gave him: for all that, blood is thicker than wather—and it's he that waked and berrid him dacently; by the same token that there was both full and plenty of the best over him: and everything, as far as Tom was consarned, dacent and creditable about the place."

"He did it for his own sake, of coorse," said Nancy, "bekase one wouldn't wish, if they had it at all, to see anyone belonging to them worse off than another at their wake or berrin."

"Thrue for you, Nancy," said M'Roarkin, "and indeed, Tom was well spoken of by the neighbours for his kindness to his brother after his death; and luck and grace attended him for it, and the world flowed upon him before it came to his own turn."

"Well, when a body dies even a natural death, it's wondherful how soon it goes about; but when they come to an untimely one, it spreads like fire on a dry mountain."

"Was there no inquest?" asked Andy Morrow.

"The sorra inquist, not making you an ill answer, sir—the people weren't so exact in them days: but anyhow, the man was dead, and what good could an inquist do him? The only thing that grieved them was that they both died without the priest: and well it might, for it's an awful thing entirely to die without having the clargy's hands over a body. I tould you that the news of his death spread over all the counthry in less than no time. Accordingly, in the coorse of the day, their relations began to come to the place; but, any way, messengers had been sent especially for them.

"The Squire very kindly lent sheets for them both to be laid out in, and mould-candlesticks to hould the lights; and, God he knows,

[1] The genuine blunders of the Irish—not those studied for them by men ignorant of their modes of expression and habits of life—are always significant, clear, and full of strong sense and moral truth.

'twas a grievous sight to see the father and mother both stretched beside one another in their poor place, and their little orphans about them ; the gorsoons—them that had sense enough to know their loss, —breaking their hearts, the crathurs, and so hoarse that they weren't able to cry or spake. But, indeed, it was worse to see the two young things going over, and wanting to get acrass to waken their daddy and mammy, poor desolit childher !

"When the corpses were washed and dressed, they looked uncommonly well, consitherin'. Larry, indeed, didn't bear death so well as Sally ; but you couldn't meet a purtier corpse than she was in a day's travelling. I say, when they were washed and dressed, their friends and neighbours knelt down round them, and offered up a Pather and Ave apiece for the good of their sowls : when this was done, they all raised the keena, stooping over them at a half bend, clapping their hands, and praising them, as far as they could say anything good of them ; and, indeed, the crathurs, they were never anyone's enemy but their own, so that nobody could say an ill word of either of them. Bad luck to it for potteen-work every day it rises ! only for it, that couple's poor orphans wouldn't be left without father or mother as they were ; nor poor Hurrish go the grey gate he did, if he had his father living, maybe : but having nobody to bridle him in, he took to horse-riding for the Squire, and then to staling them for himself. He was hanged afterwards, along with Peter Doraghy Crolly, that shot Ned Wilson's uncle of the Black Hills.

"After the first keening, the friends and neighbours took their seats about the corpse. In a short time, whisky, pipes, snuff, and tobacco came, and everyone about the place got a glass and a fresh pipe. Tom, when he held his glass in his hand, looking at his dead brother, filled up to the eyes, and couldn't for some time get out a word ; at last, when he was able to spake, 'Poor Larry,' says he, 'you're lying there low before me, and many a happy day we spint with one another. When we were childher,' said he, turning to the rest, 'we were never asunder ; he was oulder nor me by two years, and can I ever forget the leathering he gave Dick Rafferty long ago for hitting me with the rotten egg—although Dick was a great dale bigger than either of us. God knows, although you didn't thrive in life, either of you, as you might and could have done, there wasn't a more neighbourly or friendly couple in the parish they lived in ; and now, God help them, look at them both, and their poor orphans over them. Larry, acushla, your health, and, Sally, yours ; and may God Almighty have marcy on both your sowls.'

"After this, the neighbours began to flock in more generally. When any relation of the corpses would come, as soon, you see, as they'd get inside the door, whether man or woman, they'd raise the shout of a keena, and all the people about the dead would begin along with them, stooping over them and clapping their hands as before.

"Well, I said it's it that was the merry wake, and that was only the thruth, neighbours. As soon as night came, all the young boys and girls from the country-side about them flocked to it in scores. In a

short time the house was crowded, and maybe there wasn't laughing, and story-telling, and singing, and smoking, and drinking, and crying —all going on, *helter skelter*, together. When they'd be all in full chorus this-a-way, maybe, some new friend or relation, that wasn't there before, would come in, and raise the keena. Of coorse, the youngsters would then keep quiet; and if the person coming in was from the one neighbourhood with any of them that were so merry, as soon as he'd raise the shout, the merry folks would rise up, begin to pelt their hands together, and cry along with him till their eyes would be as red as a ferret's. That once over, they'd be down again at the songs, and divarsion, and divilment, just as if nothing of the kind had taken place. The other would then shake hands with the friends of the corpses, get a glass or two and a pipe, and in a few minutes be as merry as the best of them."

"Well," said Andy Morrow, "I should like to know if the Scotch and English are such *heerum-skeerum* kind of people as we Irishmen are."

"Musha, in throth I'm sure they're not," says Nancy, "for I bleeve that Irishmen are like nobody in the wide world but themselves; quare crathurs, that'll laugh, or cry, or fight with anyone, just for nothing else, good or bad, but company."

"Indeed, and you all know that what I'm saying's truth, except Mr. Morrow there, that I'm telling it to, bekase he's not in the habit of going to wakes; although, to do him justice, he's very friendly in going to a neighbour's funeral; and, indeed, *kind father for you*,[1] Mr. Morrow, for it's he that was a raal good hand at going to such places himself.

"Well, as I was telling you, there was great sport going on. In one corner you might see a knot of ould men sitting together, talking over ould times—ghost stories, fairy tales, or the great rebellion of '41, and the strange story of Lamh Dearg, or the *bloody hand*, that, maybe, I'll tell you all some other night, plase God: there they'd sit smoking—their faces quite plased with the pleasure of the pipe—amusing themselves and a crowd of people that would be listening to them with open mouth. Or, it's odds, but there would be some droll young fellow among them, taking a *rise* out of them; and, positively, he'd often find them able enough for them, particularly ould Ned Mangin, that wanted at the time only four years of a hundred. The Lord be good to him, and rest his sowl in glory, it's he that was the pleasant ould man, and could tell a story with anyone that ever got up.

"In another corner there was a different set, bent on some piece of divilment of their own. The boys would be sure to get beside their sweethearts, anyhow; and if there was a purty girl, as you may set it down there was, it's there the *skroodging*,[2] and the pushing, and the shoving, and, sometimes, the knocking down itself, would be, about

[1] That is, in this point you are of the same *kind* as your father; possessing that prominent trait in his disposition or character.

[2] The pressure in a crowd.

seeing who'd get her. There's ould Katty Duffy, that's now as crooked as the hind leg of a dog, and it's herself was then as straight as a rush and as blooming as a rose—Lord bless us, what an alteration time makes upon the strongest and fairest of us!—it's she that was the purty girl that night, and it's myself that gave Frank M'Shane, that's still alive to acknowledge it, the broad of his back upon the flure, when he thought to pull her off my knee. The very gorsoons and girshas were coorting away among themselves, and learning one another to smoke in the dark corners. But all this, Mr. Morrow, took place in the corpse-house, before ten or eleven o'clock at night; after that time the house got too throng entirely, and couldn't hould the half of them; so, by jing, off we set, maning all the youngsters of us, both boys and girls, out to Tom's barn, that was *red* up for us, there to commence the plays. When we were gone the ould people had more room, and they moved about on the sates we had left them. In the manetime, lashings of tobacco and snuff, cut in plate-fulls, and piles of fresh new pipes, were laid on the table for any man that wished to use them.

"When we got to the barn, it's then we *took our pumps off*[2] in arnest—by the hokey, such sport you never saw. The first play we began was *Hot-loof*, and maybe there wasn't skelping then. It was the two parishes of Errigle-Keeran an Errigle-Truagh against one another. There was the Slip from Althadhawan, for Errigle-Truagh, against Pat M'Ardle, that had married Lanty Gorman's daughter of Cargagh, for Errigle-Keeran. The way they play it, Mr. Morrow, is this:—two young men out of each parish go out upon the flure—one of them stands up, then bends himself, sir, at a half bend, placing his left hand behind on the back part of his ham, keeping it there to receive what it's to get. Well, there he stands, and the other coming behind him, places his left foot out before him, doubles up the cuff of his coat, to give his hand and wrist freedom: he then rises his right arm, coming down with the heel of his hand upon the other fellow's palm, under him, with full force. By jing, it's the divil's own divarsion; for you might as well get a stroke of a sledge as a blow from one of them able, hard-working fellows, with hands upon them like lime-stone. When the fellow that's down gets it hot and heavy, the man that struck him stands bent in his place, and some friend of the other comes down upon him, and pays him for what the other fellow got.

"In this way they take it, turn about, one out of each parish, till it's over; for, I believe, if they were to pelt one another *since*,[3] that they'd never give up. Bless my soul, but it was terrible to hear the strokes that the Slip and Pat M'Ardle did give that night. The Slip was a young fellow, upwards of six feet, with great able bones and little flesh, but terrible thick *shinnins*,[4] his wrist was as hard and strong as a bar of iron. M'Ardle was a low, broad man, with a *rucket*[5] head and bull neck, and a pair of shoulders that you could hardly get your arms

[1] Cleared up—set in order. [2] Threw aside all restraint.
[3] From that hour to this. [4] Sinews. [5] Curled.

about, Mr. Morrow, long as they are; it's he, indeed, that was the firm, well-built chap, entirely. At any rate, a man might as well get a kick from a horse as a stroke from either of them.

"Little Jemmy Tegue, I remimber, struck a cousin of the Slip's a very smart blow, that made him dance about the room, and blow his fingers for ten minutes after it. Jemmy, himself, was a tight, smart fellow. When the Slip saw what his cousin had got, he rises up, and stands over Jemmy so coolly, and with such good humour, that everyone in the house trembled for poor Jemmy, bekase, you see, whenever the Slip was bent on mischief, he used always to grin. Jemmy, however, kept himself bent firm; and, to do him justice, didn't flinch from under the stroke, as many of them did—no, he was like a rock. Well, the Slip, as I said, stood over him, fixing himself for the stroke, and coming down with such a pelt on poor Jemmy's hand, that the first thing we saw was the blood across the Slip's own legs and feet, that had burst out of poor Jemmy's finger-ends. The Slip then stooped to receive the next blow himself, and you may be sure there was above two dozen up to be at him. No matther; one man they all gave way to, and that was Pat M'Ardle.

"'Hould away,' says Pat—'clear off, boys, all of you—this stroke's mine by right, anyhow;—and,' says he, swearing a terrible oath, 'if you don't sup sorrow for that stroke,' says he to the Slip, 'why Pat M'Ardle's not behind you here.'

"He then up with his arm, and came down—why, you would think that the stroke he gave the Slip had druv his hand right into his body: but, any way, it's he that took full satisfaction for what his cousin got; for if the Slip's fingers had been cut off at the tops, the blood couldn't spring out from under his nails more nor it did. After this the Slip couldn't strike another blow, bekase his hand was disabled out and out.

"The next play they went to was the *Sitting Brogue*. This is played by a ring of them, sitting down upon the bare ground, keeping their knees up. A shoemaker's leather apron is then got, or a good stout brogue, and sent round under their knees. In the mane time, one stands in the middle; and after the brogue is sent round, he is to catch it as soon as he can. While he stands there, of coorse, his back must be to some one, and accordingly those that are behind him thump him right and left with the brogue, while he, all the time, is striving to catch it. Whoever he catches this brogue with must stand up in his place, while he sits down where the other had been, and then the play goes on as before.

"There's another play called the *Standing Brogue*—where one man gets a brogue of the same kind, and another stands up facing him with his hands locked together, forming an arch turned upside down. The man that houlds the brogue then strikes him with it betune the hands; and even the smartest fellow receives several pelts before he is able to close his hands and catch it; but when he does, he becomes brogue-man, and one of the opposite party stands for him until he catches it. The same thing is gone through, from one to another, on each side, until it is over.

"The next is *Frimsey Framsey*, and is played in this manner — A chair or stool is placed in the middle of the flure, and the man who manages the play sits down upon it, and calls his sweetheart, or the prettiest girl in the house. She, accordingly, comes forward, and must kiss him. He then rises up, and she sits down. 'Come now,' he says, 'fair maid—*Frimsey Framsey*, who's your fancy?' She then calls him she likes best, and when the young man she calls comes over and kisses her, he then takes her place, and calls another girl—and so on, smacking away for a couple of hours. Well, it's no wonder that Ireland's full of people; for I believe they do nothing but coort from the time they're the hoith of my leg. I dunna is it true, as I hear Captain Sloethorn's steward say, that the English-women are so fond of Irishmen?"

"To be sure, it is," said Shane Fadh; "don't I remember, myself, when Mr. Fowler went to England—and he as fine-looking a young man, at the time, as ever got into a saddle—he was riding up the street of London, one day, and his servant after him—and by the same token he was a thousand pound worse than nothing; but no matter for that, you see luck was before him—what do you think, but a rich-dressed livery servant came out, and stopping the Squire's man, axed whose servant he was.

"'Why, thin,' says Ned Magavran, who was his body servant at the time, 'bad luck to you, you spalpeen, what a question do you ax, and you have eyes in your head!' says he—'hard feeding to you!' says he, 'you vagabone, don't you see I'm my master's?'

"The Englishman laughed. 'I know that, Paddy,' says he, for they call us all Paddies in England, as if we had only the one name among us, the thieves—'but I wish to know his name,' says the Englishman.

"'You do!' says Ned; 'and by the powers,' says he, 'but you must first tell me which side of the head you'd wish to hear it an.'

"'Oh, as for that,' says the Englishman, not up to him, you see, 'I don't care much, Paddy, only let me hear it, and where he lives.'

"'Just keep your ground, then,' says Ned, 'till I light off this blood horse of mine'—he was an ould garron that was fattened up, not worth forty shillings—'this blood horse of mine,' says Ned, 'and I'll tell you.'

"So down he gets, and lays the Englishman sprawling in the channel.

"'Take that, you vagabone,' says he, 'and it'll larn you to call people by their right names agin; I was christened as well as you, you spalpeen!'

"All this time the lady was looking out of the windy, breaking her heart laughing at Ned and the servant; but, behould, she knew a thing or two, it seems; for, instead of sending a man, at all at all, what does she do, but sends her own maid, a very purty girl, who comes up to Ned, putting the same question to him.

"'What's his name, avourneen?' says Ned, melting, to be sure, at the sight of her. 'Why, then, darling, who could refuse you anything?'

But, you jewel, by the hoky, you must bribe me, or I'm dumb,' says he.

"'How could I bribe you?' says she, with a sly smile—for Ned, himself, was a well-looking young fellow at the time.

"'I'll show you that,' says Ned, 'if you tell me where you live; but, for fraid you'd forget it—with them two lips of your own, my darling.'

"'There in that great house,' says the maid: 'my mistress is one of the beautifullest and richest young ladies in London, and she wishes to know where your master could be heard of.'

"'Is that the house?' says Ned, pointing to it.

"'Exactly,' says she; 'that's it.'

"'Well, acushla,' says he, 'you've a purty and an innocent-looking face; but I'm tould there's many a trap in London well baited. Just only run over while I'm looking at you, and let me see that purty face of yours smiling at me out of the windy that that young lady is peeping at us from.'

"This she had to do.

"'My master,' thought Ned, while she was away, 'will aisily find out what kind of a house it is, anyhow, if that be it.'

"In a short time he saw her in the windy, and Ned then gave her a sign to come down to him.

"'My master,' says he, 'never was afeard to show his face, or tell his name to anyone—he's a Squire Fowler,' says he—'a sarjunt-major in a great militia regiment—he shot five men in his time, and there's not a gentleman in the country he lives in that dare say Boo to his blanket. And now, what's your own name?' says Ned, 'you flattering little blackguard, you?'

"'My name's Betty Cunningham,' says she.

"'And, next—what's your mistress's, my darling?' says Ned.

"'There it is,' says she, handing him a card.

"'Very well,' says Ned, the thief, looking at it with a great air, making as if he could read—'this will just do, a colleen bawn.'

"Do you read in your country with the wrong side of the print up?' says she.

"'Up or down,' says Ned, 'it's all one to us, in Ireland; but anyhow, I'm left-handed, you deluder!'

"The upshot of it was that her mistress turned out to be a great *hairess*, and a great beauty, and she and Fowler got married in less than a month. So, you see, it's true enough that the Englishwomen *are* fond of Irishmen,' says Shane; "but Tom, with submission for stopping you—go on with your wake."

"The next play, then, is *Marrying* ——"

"Hooh!" says Andy Morrow—"why all their plays are about kissing and marrying, and the like of that."

"Surely, and they are, sir," says Tom.

"It's all the nathur of the baste," says Alick.

"The next is marrying. A bouchal puts an ould dark coat on him, and if he can borry a wig from any of the ould men in the wake-house, why, well and good, he's the liker his work—this is the priest: he

takes and drives all the young men out of the house, and shuts the door upon them, so that they can't get in till he lets them. He then ranges the girls all beside one another, and going to the first, makes her name him she wishes to be her husband ; this she does, of coorse, and the priest lugs him in, shutting the door upon the rest. He then pronounces a funny marriage sarvice of his own between them, and the husband smacks her first, and then the priest. Well, these two are married, and he places his wife upon his knee, for fraid of taking up too much room, *you persave :* there they coort away again, and why shouldn't they? The priest then goes to the next, and makes her name her husband ; this is complied with, and he is brought in after the same manner, but no one else till they're called : he is then married, and kisses his wife, and the priest kisses her after him : and so they're all married.

"But if you'd see them that don't chance to be called at all, the figure they cut—slipping into some dark corner, to avoid the mobbing they get from the priest and the others. When they're all united, they must each sing a song—man and wife, according as they sit ; or if they can't sing, or get some one to do it for them, they're divorced. But the priest, himself, usually lilts for anyone that's not able to give a verse. You see, Mr. Morrow, there's always in the neighbourhood some droll fellow that takes all these things upon him, and if *he* happens to be absent, the wake would be quite dull."

"Well, said Andy Morrow, "have you any more of their sports, Tom?"

"Ay, have I—one of the best and pleasantest you heard yet."

"I hope there's no coorting in it," says Nancy ; "God knows we're tired of their kissing and marrying."

"Were you always so?" says Ned, across the fire to her.

"Behave yourself, Ned," says she ; "don't *you* make me spake ; sure you were set down as the greatest Brine-oge that ever was known in the parish, for such things."

"No, but don't you make *me* spake, replies Ned.

"Here, Biddy," said Nancy, "bring that uncle of yours another pint—that's what he wants most at the present time, I'm thinking."

Biddy, accordingly, complied with this.

"Don't make *me* spake," continued Ned.

"Come, Ned," she replied, "you've a fresh pint now ; so drink it, and give no more *gosther*."[1]

"*Shuid-urth!*" says Ned, putting the pint to his head, and winking slyly at the rest.

"Ay, wink!—in troth I'll be up to you for that, Ned," says Nancy ; by no means satisfied that Ned should enter into particulars. "Well, Tom," said she, diverting the conversation, "go on, and give us the remainder of your wake."

"Well," says Tom, "the next play is in the milintary line. You see Mr. Morrow, the man that leads the sports places them all on their

[1] Idle talk—gossip

sates—gets from some of the girls a white handkerchief, which he ties round his hat, as you would tie a piece of mourning; he then walks round them two or three times, singing—

Will you list and come with me, fair maid?
Will you list and come with me, fair maid?
Will you list and come with me, fair maid?
And folly the lad with the white cockade?

"When he sings this, he takes off his hat, and puts it on the head of the girl he likes best, who rises up and puts her arms round him, and then they both go about in the same way, singing the same words. She then puts the hat on some young man, who gets up, and goes round with them, singing as before. *He* next puts it on the girl *he* loves best, who, after singing and going round in the same manner, puts it on another, and *he* on *his* sweetheart, and so on. This is called the *White Cockade.* When it's all over, that is, when every young man has pitched upon the girl that he wishes to be his sweetheart, they sit down, and sing songs, and coort, as they did at the marrying. After this comes the *Weds* or *Forfeits*, or what they call putting round the button. Every one gives in a forfeit—the boys a pocket handkerchief or a penknife, and the girls a neck handkerchief or something that way. The forfeit is held over them, and each of them stoops in turn. They are then compelled to command the person that owns that forfeit to sing a song—to kiss such and such a girl—or to carry some ould man, with his legs about their neck, three times round the house, and this last is always great fun. Or, maybe, a young upsetting fellow will be sent to kiss some toothless, slavering ould woman, just to punish him; or, if a young woman is any way saucy, she'll have to kiss some ould withered fellow, his tongue hanging with age halfway down his chin, and the tobacco water trinckling from each corner of his mouth.

"By jingo, many a time, when the friends of the corpse would be breaking their very hearts with grief and affliction, I have seen them obligated to laugh out, in spite of themselves, at the drollery of the priest, with his ould black coat and wig upon him; and when the laughing fit would be over, to see them rocking themselves again with the sorrow—so sad. The best man for managing such sports in this neighbourhood, for many a year, was Roger M'Cann, that lives up as you go to the mountains. You wouldn't begrudge to go ten miles, the cowldest winter night that ever blew, to see and hear Roger.

"There's another play, that they call *the Priest of the Parish*, which is remarkably pleasant. One of the boys gets a wig upon himself, as before—goes out on the flure, places the boys in a row, calls one his *Man Jack*, and says to each, 'What will you be?' One answers, 'I'll be *black cap*,' another '*red cap*,' and so on. He then says, 'The priest of the parish has lost his considhering cap—some say this, and some say that, but I say my man Jack!' Man Jack, then, to put it off himself, says, 'Is it me, sir?' 'Yes, you, sir!' 'You lie, sir!' 'Who then, sir?' 'Black Cap! If Black Cap, then, doesn't say,

'Is it me, sir?' before the priest has time to call him, he must put his hand on his ham, and get a pelt of the brogue. A body must be supple with the tongue in it.

"After this comes one they calls *Horns*, or the *Painter*. A droll fellow gets a lump of soot or lampblack, and after fixing a ring of the boys and girls about him, he lays his two forefingers on his knees and says, 'Horns, horns, cow horns!' and then raises his fingers by a jerk up above his head; the boys and girls in the ring then do the same thing, for the meaning of the play is this:– the man with the black'ning *always* raises his fingers every time he names an animal; but if he names any that has *no* horns, and that the others jerk up their fingers then, they must get a stroke over the face with the soot. 'Horns, horns, goat horns!'—then he ups with his fingers like lightning; they must all do the same, bekase a goat *has* horns. 'Horns, horns, horse horns!'—he ups with them again, but the boys and girls ought not, bekase a horse has *not* horns; however anyone who raises *then* gets a slake. So that it all comes to this:—Anyone, you see, that lifts his fingers when an animal is named that has *no* horns—or anyone that does not raise them when a baste is mintioned that *has* horns, will get a mark. It's a purty game, and requires a keen eye and a quick hand; and, maybe, there's not fun in straiking the soot over the purty, warm, rosy cheeks of the colleens, while their eyes are dancing with delight in their heads, and their sweet breath comes over so pleasant about one's face, the darlings!—Och, och!

"There's another game they call *The Silly Ould Man*, that's played this way:—A ring of the boys and girls is made on the flure—boy and girl about—houlding one another by their hands; well and good—a young fellow gets into the middle of the ring, as 'the silly ould man.' There he stands looking at all the girls to choose a wife, and, in the manetime, the youngsters of the ring sing out—

Here's a silly ould man that lies alone,
That lies all alone,
That lies all alone;
Here's a silly ould man that lies all alone,
He wants a wife, and he can get none.

"When the boys and girls sing this, the silly ould man must choose a wife from some of the colleens belonging to the ring. Having made choice of her, she goes into the ring along with him, and they all sing out—

Now, young couple, you're married together,
You're married together,
You're married together,
You must obey your father and mother,
And love one another like sister and brother—
I pray, young couple, you'll kiss together!

And you may be sure this part of the marriage is not missed, any way."

"I doubt," said Andy Morrow, "that good can't come of so much kissing, marrying, and coorting."

The narrator twisted his mouth knowingly, and gave a significant groan.

"*Be dhe husth*,[1] hould your tongue, Misther Morrow," said he. "Biddy, avourneen," he continued, addressing Biddy and Bessy, "and Bessy, alannah, just take a friend's advice, and never mind going to wakes; to be sure there's plinty of fun and divarsion at such places, but—healths apiece!" putting the pint to his lips—"and that's all I say about it."

"Right enough Tom," observed Shane Fadh—"sure most of the matches are planned at them, and, I may say, most of the *runaways* too—poor young foolish crathurs, going off, and getting themselves married; then bringing small, helpless families upon their hands, without money or manes to begin the world with, and afterwards likely to eat one another out of the face for their folly. However, there's no putting ould heads upon young shoulders, and I doubt, except the wakes are stopped altogether, that it'll be the ould case still."

"I never remember being at a counthry wake," said Andy Morrow. "How is everything laid out in the house?"

"Sure it's to you I'm telling the whole story, Mr. Morrow: these thieves about me here know all about it as well as I do—the house, eh? Why, you see, the two corpses were stretched beside one another, washed and laid out. There were long deal boords, with their ends upon two stools, laid over the bodies; the boords were covered with a white sheet got at the big house, so the corpses weren't to be seen. On these, again, were placed large mould candles, plates of cut tobacco, pipes, and snuff, and so on. Sometimes corpses are waked in a bed, with their faces visible: when that is the case, white sheets and crosses are pinned up about the bed, except in the front; but when they're undher boord, a set of ould women sit smoking and rocking themselves from side to side, quite sorrowful—these are *keeners*—friends or relations; and when everyone connected with the dead comes in, they raise the *keene*, like a *song* of sorrow, wailing and clapping their hands.

"The furniture is mostly removed, and sates made round the walls, where the neighbours sit smoking, chatting, and gosthering. The best of aiting and dhrinking that they can afford is provided; and, indeed, there is generally open house, for it's unknown how people injure themselves by their kindness and waste at christ'nings, weddings and wakes.

"In regard to poor Larry's wake—we had all this, and more at it; for, as I obsarved a while agone, the man had made himself no friends when he was living, and the neighbours gave a loose to all kinds of divilment when he was dead. Although there's no man would be guilty of any disrespect where the dead are, yet, when a person has led a good life, and conducted themselves dacently and honestly, the young people of the neighbourhood show their respect by going

[1] The translation follows it above.

through their little plays and divarsions quieter and with less noise, lest they may give any offince; but, as I said, whenever the person didn't live as they ought to do, there's no stop to their noise and *rollokin*.[1]

"When it drew near morning, everyone of us took his sweetheart, and, after convoying her home, went to our own houses, to get a little sleep. So that was the end of poor Larry M'Farland, and his wife Sally Lowry."

"Success, Tom!" said Bill M'Kinny; "take a pull of the malt now, afther the story, your soul! But what was the funeral like?"

"Why, then, a poor berrin it was," said Tom; "a miserable sight, God knows—just a few of the neighbours; for those that used to take his thrate, and, while he had a shilling in his pocket, blarney him up, not one of the skulking thieves showed their faces at it—a good warning to foolish men that throw their money down throaths that haven't hearts anundher them. But, boys, *I* desarve another thrate, I think, afther my story!"

THE BATTLE OF THE FACTIONS.

(Composed into Narrative by a Hedge Schoolmaster.)

"MY grandfather, Connor O'Callaghan, though a tall, erect man, with white flowing hair, like snow, that falls profusely about his broad shoulders, is now in his eighty-third year; an amazing age, considhering his former habits. His countenance is still marked with honesty and traces of hard fighting, and his cheeks ruddy and cudgel-worn; his eyes, though not as black as they used to be, have lost very little of that nate fire which characterises the eyes of the O'Callaghans, and for which I myself have been—but my modesty won't allow me to allude to that: let it be sufficient for the present to say that there never was remembered so handsome a man in his native parish, and that I am as like him as one Cork-red phatie is to another: indeed, it has been often said that it would be hard to meet an O'Callaghan without a black eye in his head. He has lost his fore-teeth, however, a point in which, unfortunately, I, though his grandson, have a strong resemblance to him. The truth is, they were knocked out of him in rows, before he had reached his thirty-fifth year—a circumstance which the kind reader will be pleased to receive in extenuation for the same defect in myself. That, however, is but a trifle, which never gave either of us much trouble.

"It pleased Providence to bring us through many hair-breadth

[1] Uproariousness.

escapes with our craniums uncracked; and when we considher that he, on taking a retrogadation of his past life, can indulge in the plasing recollection of having broken two skulls in his fighting days, and myself one, I think we have both rason to be thankful. He was a powerful *bulliah batthagh* in his day, and never met a man able to fight him, except big Mucklemurray, who stood before him the greater part of an hour and a half, in the fair of Knockimdowney, on the day that the first great fight took place—twenty years afther the hard frost—between the O'Callaghans and the O'Hallaghans. The two men fought single hands—for both factions were willing to let them try the engagement out, that they might see what side could boast of having the best man. They began where you enter the north side of Knockimdowney, and fought successfully up to the other end, then back again to the spot where they commenced, and afterwards up to the middle of the town, right opposite to the market-place, where my grandfather, by the same-a-token, lost a grinder; but he soon took satisfaction for that, by giving Mucklemurray a tip above the eye with the end of an oak stick, dacently loaded with lead, which made the poor man feel very quare entirely, for the few days that he survived it.

"Faith, if an Irishman happened to be born in Scotland, he would find it mighty inconvanient—afther losing two or three grinders in a row—to manage the hard oaten bread that they use there; for which rason, God be good to his sowl that first invented the phaties, anyhow, because a man can masticate them without a tooth at all at all. I'll engage, if larned books were consulted, it would be found out that he was an Irishman. I wonder that neither Pastorini nor Columbkill mentions anything about him in their prophecies consarning the church; for my own part, I'm strongly inclinated to believe that it must have been Saint Patrick himself; and I think that his driving all kinds of venemous reptiles out of the kingdom is, according to the Socrastic method of argument, an undeniable proof of it. The subject, to a dead certainty, is not touched upon in the Brehone Code, nor by any of the three Psalters, which is extremely odd, seeing that the earth never produced a root equal to it in the multiplying force of prolification. It is, indeed, the root of prosperity to a fighting people: and many a time my grandfather boasts, to this day, that the first bit of *bread* he ever *ett* was a *phatie*.

"In mentioning my grandfather's fight with Mucklemurray, I happened to name them blackguards, the O'Hallaghans: hard fortune to the same set, for they have no more discretion in their quarrels than so many Egyptian mummies, African buffoons, or any other uncivilised animals. It was one of them, he that's married to my own fourth cousin, Biddy O'Callaghan, that knocked two of my grinders out, for which piece of civility I have just had the satisfaction of breaking a splinter or two in his carcase, being always honestly disposed to pay my debts.

"With respect to the O'Hallaghans, they and our family have been next neighbours since before the flood—and that's as good as two

hundred years; for I believe it's 198, anyhow, since my great grandfather's grand-uncle's ould mare was swept out of the 'Island,' in the dead of the night, about half an hour after the whole country had been *ris* out of their beds by the thunder and lightning. Many a field of oats, and many a life, both of beast and Christian, was lost in it, especially of those that lived on the *holmes* about the edge of the river: and it was true for them that said it came before something; for the *next year* was one of the hottest *summers* ever remembered in Ireland.

"These O'Hallaghans couldn't be at peace with a saint. Before they and our faction began to quarrel, it's said that the O'Connells, or Connells, and they had been at it—and a blackguard set the same O'Connell's were, at all times—in fair and market, dance, wake, and berrin, setting the country on fire. Whenever they met, it was heads cracked and bones broken; till by degrees the O'Connells fell away, one after another, from fighting, accidents, and hanging; so that at last there was hardly the name of one of them in the neighbourhood. The O'Hallaghans, after this, had the country under themselves—were the cocks of the walk entirely—who but they? A man darn't look crooked at them, or he was certain of getting his head in his fist. And when they'd get drunk in a fair, it was nothing but 'Whoo! for the O'Hallaghans!' and leaping yards high off the pavement, brandishing their cudgels over their heads, striking their heels against their hams, tossing up their hats; and when all would fail, they'd strip off their coats, and trail them up and down the street, shouting, 'Who dare touch the coat of an O'Hallaghan? Where's the blackguard Connells now?"—and so on, till flesh and blood couldn't stand it.

"In the course of time, the whole country was turned against them; for no crowd could get together in which they didn't kick up a row, nor a bit of stray fighting couldn't be, but they'd pick it up first—and if a man would venture to give them a contrairy answer, he was sure to get the crame of a good welting for his pains. The very landlord was timorous of them; for when they'd get behind in their *rint*, hard fortune to the bailiff, or proctor, or steward, he could find, that would have anything to say to them. And the more wise they; for, maybe, a month would hardly pass till all belonging to them in the world would be in a heap of ashes: and who could say who did it? for they were as cunning as foxes.

"If one of them wanted a wife, it was nothing but find out the purtiest and richest farmer's daughter in the neighbourhood, and next march into her father's house, at the dead hour of night, tie and gag every mortal in it, and off with her to some friend's place in another part of the country. Then what could be done? If the girl's parents didn't like to give in, their daughter's name was sure to be ruined; at all events, no other man would think of marrying her, and the only plan was to make the worst of a bad bargain; and God he knows, it was making a bad bargain for a girl to have any matrimonial concatenation with the same O'Hallaghans; for they always had the bad

drop in them, from first to last, from big to little—the blackguards! But wait, it's not over with them yet.

"The bone of contintion that got between them and our faction was this circumstance; their lands and ours were divided by a river that ran down from the high mountains of Sliew Boglish, and after a coorse of eight or ten miles, disembogued itself—first into George Duffy's mill-dam, and afterwards into that superb stream, the Blackwater, that might be well and appropriately appellated the Irish Niger. This river, which, though small at first, occasionally inflated itself to such a gigantic altitude that it swept away cows, corn, and cottages, or whatever else happened to be in the way—was the march-ditch, or *merin* between our farms. Perhaps it is worth while remarking, as a solution for natural philosophers, that these inundations were much more frequent in winter than in summer—though, when they did occur in summer, they were truly terrific.

"God be with the days, when I and half a dozen gorsoons used to go out, of a warm Sunday in summer—the bed of the river nothing but a line of white meandering stones, so hot that you could hardly stand upon them, with a small obscure thread of water creeping invisibly among them, hiding itself, as it were, from the scorching sun—except here and there that you might find a small crystal pool where the streams had accumulated. Our plan was to bring a pocketful of roche lime with us, and put it into the pool, when all the fish used to rise on the instant to the surface, gasping with open mouth for fresh air, and we had only to lift them out of the water; a nate plan, which, perhaps, might be adopted successfully on a more extensive scale by the Irish fisheries. Indeed, I almost regret that I did not remain in that station of life, for I was much happier than ever I was since I began to study and practice larning. But this is vagating from the subject.

"Well, then, I have said that them O'Hallaghans lived beside us, and that this stream divided our lands. About half a quarter—*i.e.* to accommodate myself to the vulgar phraseology—or, to speak more scientifically, one-eighth of a mile from our house, was as purty a hazel glen as you'd wish to see, near half a mile long—its developments and proportions were truly classical. In the bottom of this glen was a small green island, about twelve yards, diametrically, of Irish admeasurement, that is to say, be the same more or less—at all events, it lay in the way of the river, which, however, ran towards the O'Hallaghan side, and, consequently, the island was our property.

"Now, you'll observe, that this river had been, for ages, the merin between the two farms, for they both belonged to separate landlords, and so long as it kept the O'Hallaghan side of the little peninsula in question, there could be no dispute about it, for all was clear. One wet winter, however, it seemed to change its mind upon the subject; for it wrought and wore away a passage for itself on our side of the island, and by that means took part, as it were, with the O'Hallaghans, leaving the territory which had been our property for centhries, in their possession. This was a vexatious change to us, and, indeed,

eventually produced very feudal consequences. No sooner had the stream changed sides, than the O'Hallaghans claimed the island as theirs, according to their tenement ; and we, having had it for such length of time in our possession, could not break ourselves of the habitude of occupying it. They incarcerated our cattle, and we incarcerated theirs. They summoned us to their landlord, who was a magistrate ; and we summoned them to ours, who was another. The verdicts were north and south. Their landlord gave it in favour of them, and ours in favour of us. The one said he had law on his side ; the other, that he had proscription and possession, length of time and usage.

"The two Squires then fought a challenge upon the head of it, and what was more singular, upon the disputed spot itself; the one standing on their side—the other on ours ; for it was just *twelve paces* every way. Their friend was a small, light man, with legs like drumsticks ; the other was a large, able-bodied gentleman, with a red face and hooked nose. They exchanged two shots, one only of which—the second—took effect. It pastured upon their landlord's spindle leg, on which he held it out, exclaiming, that while he lived he would never fight another challenge with his antagonist, 'because,' said he, looking at his own spindle shank, 'the man who could hit *that* could hit *anything*.'

"We then were advised, by an attorney, to go to law with them ; and they were advised by another attorney to go to law with us : accordingly, we did so, and in the course of eight or nine years it might have been decided ; but just as the legal term approximated in which the decision was to be announced, the river divided itself with mathematical exactitude on each side of the island. This altered the state and law of the question *in toto* ; but, in the meantime, both we and the O'Hallaghans were nearly fractured by the expenses. Now during the lawsuit, we usually houghed and mutilated each other's cattle, according as they trespassed the premises. This brought on the usual concomitants of various battles, fought and won by both sides, and occasioned the lawsuit to be dropped ; for we found it a mighty inconvanient matter to fight it out both ways—by the same a-token that I think it a great proof of stultity to go to law at all at all, as long as a person is able to take it into his own management. For the only incongruity in the matter is this :—that, in the one case, a set of lawyers have the law in *their* hands, and, in the other, that you have it in *your own*—that's the only difference, and 'tis easy knowing where the advantage lies.

"We, however, paid the most of the expenses, and would have *fed* them all with the greatest integrity, were it not that our attorney, when about to issue an execution against our property, happened somehow to be shot, one evening, as he returned home from a dinner which was given by him that was attorney for the O'Hallaghans. Many a boast the O'Hallaghans made, before the quarrelling between us and them commenced, that they'd sweep the streets with the *fighting* O'Callaghans, which was an epithet that was occasionally applied to our

family. We differed, however, materially from them; for we were honourable, never starting out in dozens on a single man or two, and beating him into insignificance. A couple, or maybe, when irritated, three, were the most we ever set at a single enemy; and, if we left him lying in a state of imperception, it was the most we ever did, except in a regular confliction, when a man is justified in saving his own skull by breaking one of an opposite faction. For the truth of the business is, that he who breaks the skull of him who endeavours to break his own, is safest; and, surely, when a man is driven to such an alternative, the choice is unhesitating.

"O'Hallaghans' attorney, however, had better luck: they were, it is true, rather in the retrograde with him touching the law charges, and, of coorse, it was only candid in him to look for his own. One morning he found that two of his horses had been executed by some *incendiary* unknown, in the course of the night; and, on going to look at them, he found a taste of a notice posted on the inside of the stable door, giving him intelligence that if he did not find a *horpus corpus* whereby to transfer his body out of the country, he would experience a fate parallel to that of his brother lawyer or the horses. And, undoubtedly, if honest people never perpetrated worse than banishing such varmin, along with proctors, and drivers of all kinds, out of a civilised country, they would not be so very culpable or atrocious.

"After this, the lawyer went to reside in Dublin; and the only bodily injury he received was the death of a land-agent and a bailiff, who lost their lives faithfully in driving for rent. They died, however, successfully; the bailiff having been provided for nearly a year before the agent was sent to give an account of his stewardship—as the authorised version has it.

"The occasion on which the first rencounter between us and the O'Hallaghans took place, was a peaceable one. Several of our respective friends undertook to produce a friendly and oblivious potation between us—it was at a berrin belonging to a corpse who was related to us both; and, certainly in the beginning, we were all as thick as whigged milk. But there is no use now in dwelling too long upon that circumstance: let it be sufficient to assert that the accommodation was effectuated by fists and cudgels, on both sides—the first man that struck a blow being one of the friends that wished to bring about the tranquillity. From that out, the play commenced, and God he knows when it may end; for no dacent faction could give in to another faction, without losing their character, and being kicked, and cuffed, and kilt, every week in the year.

"It is the *great battle*, however, which I am after going to describe; that in which we and the O'Hallaghans had contrived, one way or other, to have the parish divided—one half for them, and the other for us; and, upon my credibility, it is no exaggeration to declare that the whole parish, though ten miles by six, assembled itself in the town of Knockimdowney upon this interesting occasion. In thruth, Ireland ought to be a land of mathemathitians; for I'm sure her population is well trained, at all events, in the two sciences of *multi-*

plication and *division*. Before I adventure, however, upon the narration, I must wax pathetic a little, and then proceed with the main body of the story.

"Poor Rose O'Hallaghan !—or, as she was designated—*Rose Galh*, or *Fair Rose*, and sometimes simply Rose Hallaghan, because the detention of the big O would produce an afflatus in the pronunciation that would be mighty inconvanient to such as did not understand oratory—besides that, the Irish are rather fond of sending the liquids in a guttheral direction — Poor Rose ! that faction *fight* was a black *day* to her, the sweet innocent ! when it was well known that there wasn't a man, woman, or child, on either side, that wouldn't lay their hands under her feet. However, in order to *insense* the reader better into her character, I will commence a small sub-narration, which will afterwards emerge into the parent stream of the story.

"The chapel of Knockimdowney is a slated house, without any ornament, except a set of wooden cuts, painted red and blue, that are placed *seriatim* around the square of the building in the internal side. Fourteen of these suspend at equal distances on the walls, each set in a painted frame ; these constitute a certain species of country devotion. It is usual on Sundays for such of the congregations as are most inclined to piety, to genuflect at the first of these pictures, and commence a certain number of prayers to *it* ; after the repitition of which, they travel on their knees along the bare earth to the second, where they repate another prayer peculiar to *that*, and so on, till they finish the grand *tower* of the interior. Such, however, as are not especially dictated to this kind of locomotive prayer, collect together in various knots, through the chapel, and amuse themselves by auditing or narrating anecdotes, discussing policy, or detraction ; and in case it be summer, and a day of a fine texture, they scatter themselves into little crowds on the chapel-green, or lie at their length upon the grass in listless groups, giving way to chat and laughter.

"In this mode, laired on the sunny side of the ditches and hedges, or collected in rings round that respectable character, the Academician of the village, or some other well-known *Shanahas*, or story-teller, they amuse themselves till the priest's arrival. Perhaps, too, some walking geographer of a pilgrim may happen to be present ; and if there be, he is sure to draw a crowd about him, in spite of all the efforts of the learned Academician to the reverse. It is no unusual thing to see such a vagrant, in all the vanity of conscious sanctimony, standing in the middle of the attentive peasants, like the knave and fellows of a cart-wheel—if I may be permitted the loan of an apt similitude—repeating some piece of unfathomable and labyrinthine devotion, or perhaps warbling, from Stenthorian lungs, some *melodia sacra*, in an untranslateable tongue ; or, it may be, exhibiting the mysterious power of an amber bade, fastened as a decade to his *paudareens*, lifting a chaff or light bit of straw by the force of its attraction. This is an exploit which causes many an eye to turn from the bades to his own bearded face, with a hope, as it were, of being

able to catch a glimpse of the lurking sanctimony by which the knave hoaxes them in the miraculous.

"The amusements of the females are also nearly such as I have drafted out. Nosegays of the darlings might be seen sated on green banks, or sauntering about with a sly intention of coming in compact with their sweethearts, or, like bachelor's buttons in smiling rows, criticising the young men as they pass. Others of them might be seen screened behind a hedge, with their backs to the spectators, taking the papers off their curls before a small bit of looking-glass placed against the ditch; or perhaps putting on their shoes and stockings—which phrase can be used only by authority of the figure, *heusteron proteron* —inasmuch as if they put on the shoes first, you 'persave, it would be a scientific job to get on the stockings after; but it's an idiomatical expression, and therefore justifiable. However, it's a general custom in the country, which I dare to say has not yet spread into large cities, for the young women to walk barefooted to the chapel, or within a short distance of it, that they may exhibit their bleached thread stockings and well-greased slippers to the best advantage, not pertermitting a well-turned ancle, and neat leg, which, I may fearlessly assert, my fair countrywomen can show against any other nation living or dead.

"One sunny Sabbath the congregation of Knockimdowney were thus assimilated, amusing themselves in the manner I have just outlined: a series of country girls sat on a little green mount, called the Rabbit Bank, from the circumstance of its having been formerly an open burrow, though of late years it has been closed. It was near twelve o'clock, the hour at which Father Luke O'Shaughran was generally seen topping the rise of the hill at Larry MuHigan's public-house, jogging on his bay hack at something between a walk and a trot—that is to say, his horse moved his fore and hind legs on the off side at one motion, and the fore and hind legs of the near side in another, going at a kind of dog's trot, like the pace of an idiot with sore feet in a shower—a pace, indeed, to which the animal had been set for the last sixteen years, but beyond which, no force, or entreaty, or science, or power, either divine or human, of his reverence, could drive him. As yet, however, he had not become apparent; and the girls already mentioned were discussing the pretensions which several of their acquaintances had to dress or beauty.

"'Peggy,' said Katty Carroll to her companion, Peggy Donohoe, 'were you *out* last Sunday?'

"'No, in troth, Katty, I was disappointed in getting my shoes from Paddy Malone, though I left him the measure of my foot three weeks agone, and gave him a thousand warnings to make them *duck-nebs*. but instead of that,' said she, holding out a very purty foot, 'he has made them as sharp in the toe as a pick-axe, and a full mile too short for me: but why do ye ax was I *out*, Katty?'

"'Oh, nothing,' responded Katty, 'only that you missed a sight, anyway.'

"'What was it Katty, a-hagur?' asked her companion with mighty great curiosity.

"'Why, nothing less, indeed, nor Rose Cuillenan, decked out in a white muslin gown, and a black sprush bonnet, tied under her chin wid a silk ribbon, no less: but what killed us, out and out, was—you wouldn't guess?'

"'Arrah, how could I guess, woman alive? A silk handkerchy, maybe; for I wouldn't doubt the same Rose, but she would be setting herself up for the likes of sich a thing.'

"'It's herself that had, as red as scarlet, about her neck; but that's not it.'

"'Arrah, Katty, tell it to us at wanst; out with it, a-hagur; sure there's no treason in it, anyhow.'

"'Why, thin, nothing less nor a crass-bar red and white pocket-handkerchy, to wipe her pretty complexion wid!'

"To this Peggy replied by a loud laugh, in which it was difficult to say whether there was more of sathir than astonishment.

"'A pocket-handkerchy!' she exclaimed; 'musha, are we alive afther that, at all at all! Why, that bates Molly M'Cullagh, and her red mantle entirely; I'm sure, but it's well come up for the likes of her, a poor imperint crathur, that's sprung from nothing, to give herself sich airs.'

"'Molly M'Cullagh, indeed,' said Katty; 'why, they oughtn't to be mintioned in the one day, woman; Molly's come of a dacent ould stock, and kind mother for her to keep herself in genteel ordher at all times; she seen nothing else, and can afford it, not all as one as the other *flipe*, that would go to the world's end for a bit of dress.'

"'Sure she thinks she's a beauty too, if you plase;' said Peggy, tossing her head with an air of disdain; 'but tell us, Katty, how did the muslin sit upon her at all, the upsetting crathur?'

"'Why, for all the world like a shift on a May-powl, or a stocking on a body's nose: only nothing killed us outright but the pocket-handkerchy!'

"'But,' said the other, 'what could we expect from a proud piece like her, that brings a Manwill[1] to mass every Sunday, purtending she can read in it, and Jem Finigan saw the wrong side of the book *toards* her, the Sunday of the *Purcession!*'

"At this hit they both formed another risible junction, quite as sarcastic as the former—in the midst of which the innocent object of their censure, dressed in all her obnoxious finery, came up and joined them. She was scarcely sated—I blush to the very point of my pen during the manuscription—when the confabulation assumed a character directly antipodial to that which marked the precedent dialogue.

"'My gracious, Rose, but that's a purty thing you have got in your gown! where did you buy it?'

"'Och, thin, not a one of myself likes it over much. I'm sorry I didn't buy a gingham; I could have got a beautiful patthern, all out, for two shillings less: but they don't wash so well as this. I bought it in Paddy Gartland's, Peggy.'

[1] Manual—a Catholic prayer-book.

"'Troth, it's nothing else but a great beauty; I didn't see anything on you this long time becomes you so well, and I've remarked that you always look best in white.'

"'Who made it, Rose,' inquired Katty, 'for it sits illegant?'

"'Indeed,' replied Rose, 'for the differ of the price, I thought it better to bring it to Peggy Boyle, and be sartin of not having it spoiled. Nelly Keenan made the last, and although there was a full breadth more in it nor this, bad cess to the one of her but spoiled it on me; it was ever so much too short in the body, and too tight in the sleeves, and then I had no step at all at all.'

"'The sprush bonnet is exactly the fit for the gown,' observed Katty; 'the black and the white's jist the cut—how many yards had you, Rose?'

"'Jist ten and a half; but the half-yard was for the tucks.'

"'Ay, faix! and brave full tucks she left in it; ten would do *me*, Rose?'

"'Ten! no nor ten and a half; you're a size bigger nor me at the laste, Peggy; but you'd be asy fitted, you're so *well* made.'

"'Rose, *darling*,' said Peggy, 'that's a great beauty, and shows off your complexion all to pieces: you have no notion how well you look in it and the sprush.'

"In a few minutes after this, her namesake, Rose Galh O'Hallaghan, came towards the chapel, in society with her father, mother, and her two sisters. The eldest, Mary, was about twenty-one; Rose, who was the second, about nineteen, or scarcely that; and Nancy, the junior of the three, about twice seven.

"'There's the O'Hallaghans,' says Rose.

"'Ay,' replied Katty; 'you may talk of beauty, now; did you ever lay your two eyes on the likes of Rose for downright—musha if myself knows what to call it—but, anyhow, she's the lovely crathur to look at.'

"Kind reader, without a single disrespectful insinuation against any portion of the fair sex, you may judge what Rose O'Hallaghan must have been, when even these three were necessitated to praise her in her absence.

"'I'll warrant,' observed Katty, 'we'll soon be after seeing John O'Callaghan' (he was my own cousin) sthrolling afther them, at his ase.'

"'Why,' asked Rose, 'what makes you say that!'

"'Bekase,' replied the other, 'I have a rason for it.'

"'Sure, John O'Callaghan wouldn't be thinking of her,' observed Rose, 'and their families would see other shot; their factions would never have a crass marriage, anyhow.'

"'Well,' said Peggy, 'it's the thousand pities that the same two couldn't go together: for, fair and handsome as Rose is, you'll not deny but John comes up to her: but faix, sure enough it's they that's the proud people on both sides, and dangerous to make or meddle with, not saying that ever there was the likes of the same two for dacency and peaceableness among either of the factions.'

"'Didn't I tell yees?' cried Katty; 'look at him now, staling afther her, and it'll be the same thing going home agin; and if Rose is not much belied, it's not a bit displasing to her, they say.'

"'Between ourselves,' observed Peggy, 'it would be no wondher the darling young crathur would fall in love with him, for you might thravel the counthry afore you'd meet with his fellow for face and figure.'

"'There's Father Ned,' remarked Katty; 'we had betther get into the chapel before the *scroodgen* comes an, or your bonnet and gown, Rose, won't be the betther for it.'

"They now proceeded to the chapel, and those who had been amusing themselves after the same mode, followed their exemplar. In a short time the hedges and ditches adjoining the chapel were quite in solitude, with the exception of a few persons from the extreme parts of the parish, who might be seen running with all possible velocity 'to overtake mass,' as the phrase on that point expresses itself.

"The chapel of Knockimdowney was situated at the foot of a range of lofty mountains; a by-road went past the very door, which had under subjection a beautiful extent of cultivated country, diversificated by hill and dale, or rather by hill and hollow; for as far as my own geographical knowledge went, I have uniformly found them inseparable. It was also ornamented with the waving verdure of rich corn-fields and meadows, not pretermitting phatie-fields in full blossom—a part of rural landscape which, to my utter astonishment, has escaped the pen of poet and the brush of painter; although I will risque my reputation as a man of pure and categorical taste, if a finer ingredient in the composition of a landscape could be found than a field of Cork-red phaties, or Moroky *blacks* in full bloom, allowing a man to judge by the pleasure they confer upon the eye, and therefore to the heart. About a mile up from the chapel, towards the south, a mountain-stream—not the one already intimated—over which there was no bridge, crossed the road. But in lieu of a bridge, there was a long double plank laid over it, from bank to bank; and as the river was broad, and not sufficiently incarcerated within its channel, the neighbours were necessitated to throw these planks across the narrowest part they could find in the contiguity of the road. This part was consequently the deepest, and, in floods, the most dangerous; for the banks were elevated as far as they went, and quite tortuositous.

"Shortly after the priest had entered the chapel, it was observed that the hemisphere became, of a sudden, unusually obscure, though the preceding part of the day had not only been uncloudously bright, but hot in a most especial manner. The obscurity, however, increased rapidly, accompanied by that gloomy stillness which always takes precedence of a storm, and fills the mind with vague and interminable terror. But this ominous silence was not long unfractured; for soon after the first appearance of the gloom, a flash of lightning quivered through the chapel, followed by an extravagantly loud clap of thunder, which shook the very glass in the windows, and filled the congregation to the brim with terror. Their dismay, however, would have been

infinitely greater, only for the presence of his reverence, and the confidence which might be traced to the solemn occasion on which they were assimilated.

"From this moment the storm became progressive in dreadful magnitude, and the thunder, in concomitance with the most vivid flashes of lightning, pealed through the sky with an awful grandeur and magnificence that were exalted, and even rendered more sublime, by the still solemnity of religious worship. Every heart now prayed fervently—every spirit shrunk into a deep sense of its own guilt and helplessness—and every conscience was terror-stricken, as the voice of an angry God thundered out of his temple of storms through the heavens; for truly, as the authorised version has it, 'darkness was under his feet, and his pavilion round about was dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies, because he was wroth.'

"The rain now condescended in even down torrents, and thunder succeeded thunder in deep and terrific peals, whilst the roar of the gigantic echoes that deepened and reverberated among the glens and hollows—'laughing in their mountain mirth'—hard fortune to me, but they made the flesh creep on my bones!

"This lasted for an hour, when the thunder slackened; but the rain still continued. As soon as mass was over, and the storm had elapsed, except an odd peal which might be heard rolling at a distance behind the hills, the people began gradually to recover their spirits, and enter into confabulation; but to venture out was still impracticable. For about another hour it rained incessantly, after which it ceased; the hemisphere became lighter, and the sun shone out once more upon the countenance of nature with his former brightness. The congregation then decanted itself out of the chapel—the spirits of the people dancing with that remarkable buoyancy or juvenility which is felt after a thunderstorm, when the air is calm, soople, and balmy, and all nature garmented with glittering verdure and light. The crowd next began to commingle on their way home, and to make the usual observations upon the extraordinary storm which had just passed, and the probable effect it would produce on the fruit and agriculture of the neighbourhood.

"When the three young women, whom we have already introduced to our respectable readers, had evacuated the chapel, they determined to substantiate a certitude, as far as their observation could reach, as to the truth of what Kitty Carroll had hinted at, in reference to John O'Callaghan's attachment to Rose Galh O'Hallaghan, and her taciturn approval of it. For this purpose they kept their eye upon John, who certainly seemed in no especial hurry home, but lingered upon the chapel green in a very careless method. Rose Galh, however, soon made her appearance, and, after going up the chapel-road a short space, John slyly walked at some distance behind, without seeming to pay her any particular notice, whilst a person up to the secret might observe Rose's bright eye sometimes peeping back, to see if he was after her. In this manner they proceeded until they came to the river, which, to their great alarm, was almost fluctuating over its highest banks.

"A crowd was now assembled, consulting as to the safest method of crossing the planks, under which the red boiling current ran, with less violence, it is true, but much deeper than in any other part of the stream. The final decision was that the very young and the old, and such as were feeble, should proceed by a circuit of some miles to a bridge that crossed it, and that the young men should place themselves on their knees along the planks, their hands locked in each other, thus forming a support on one side, upon which such as had courage to venture across might lean, in case of accident or megrim. Indeed, anybody that had able nerves might have crossed the planks without this precaution, had they been dry; but, in consequence of the rain, and the frequent attrition of feet, they were quite slippery; and, besides, the flood rolled terrifically two or three yards below them, which might be apt to beget a megrim that would not be felt if there was no flood.

"When this expedient had been hit upon, several young men volunteered themselves to put it in practice; and in a short time a considerable number of both sexuals crossed over, without the occurrence of any unpleasant accident. Paddy O'Hallaghan and his family had been stationed for some time on the bank, watching the success of the plan; and as it appeared not to be attended with any particular danger, they also determined to make the attempt. About a perch below the planks stood John O'Callaghan, watching the progress of those who were crossing them, but taking no part in what was going forward. The river under the planks, and for some perches above and below them, might be about ten feet deep; but to those who could swim it was less perilous, should any accident befall them, than those parts where the current was more rapid, but shallower. The water here boiled, and bubbled, and whirled about; but it was slow, and its yellow surface unbroken by rocks or fords.

"The first of the O'Hallaghans that ventured over it was the youngest, who, being captured by the hand, was encouraged by many cheerful expressions from the young men who were clinging to the planks. She got safe over, however; and when she came to the end, one who was stationed on the bank gave her a joyous pull, that translated her several yards upon *terra firma*.

"'Well, Nancy,' he observed, '*you're* safe, anyhow; and if I don't dance at your wedding for this, I'll never say you're dacent.'

"To this Nancy gave a jocular promise, and he resumed his station, that he might be ready to render similar assistance to her next sister. Rose Gallh then went to the edge of the plank several times, but her courage as often refused to be forthcoming. During her hesitation, John O'Callaghan stooped down, and privately untied his shoes, then unbuttoned his waistcoat, and very gently, being unwilling to excite notice, slipped the knot of his cravat. At long last, by the encouragement of those who were on the plank, Rose attempted the passage, and had advanced as far as the middle of it, when a fit of dizziness and alarm seized her with such violence that she lost all consciousness —a circumstance of which those who handed her along were ignorant.

The consequence, as might be expected, was dreadful; for as one of the young men was receiving her hand, that he might pass her to the next, she lost her momentum, and was instantaneously precipitated into the boiling current.

"The wild and fearful cry of horror that succeeded this cannot be laid on paper. The eldest sister fell into strong convulsions, and several of the other females fainted on the spot. The mother did not faint; but, like Lot's wife, she seemed to have been translated into stone: her hands became clenched convulsively, her teeth locked, her nostrils dilated, and her eyes shot halfway out of her head. There she stood, looking upon her daughter struggling in the flood, with a fixed gaze of wild and impotent frenzy, that, for fearfulness, beat the thunderstorm all to nothing. The father rushed to the edge of the river, oblivious of his incapability to swim, determined to save her or lose his own life, which latter would have been a *dead* certainty, had he ventured; but he was prevented by the crowd, who pointed out to him the madness of such a project.

"'For God's sake, Paddy, don't attimpt it,' they exclaimed, 'except you wish to lose your own life, widout being able to save hers: no man could swim in that flood, and it upwards of ten feet deep.'

"Their arguments, however, were lost upon him; for, in fact, he was insensible to everything but his child's preservation. He, therefore, only answered their remonstrances by attempting to make another plunge into the river.

"'Let me alone, will yees,' said he—'let me alone! I'll either save my child, Rose, or die along with her! How could I live after her? Merciful God, any of them but *her*! Oh! Rose, darling,' he exclaimed, 'the favourite of my heart—will no one save you?' All this passed in less than a minute.

"Just as these words were uttered, a plunge was heard a few yards above the bridge, and a man appeared in the flood, making his way with rapid strokes to the drowning girl. Another cry now arose from the spectators. 'It's John O'Callaghan,' they shouted—'it's John O'Callaghan, and they'll be both lost.' 'No,' exclaimed others; 'if it's in the power of man to save her, *he* will!' 'Oh, blessed father, she's lost!' now burst from all present; for, after having struggled and been kept floating for some time by her garments, she at length sunk, apparently exhausted and senseless, and the thief of a flood flowed over her, as if she had been under its surface.

"When O'Callaghan saw that she went down, he raised himself up in the water, and cast his eye towards that part of the bank opposite which she disappeared, evidently, as it proved, that he might have a mark to guide him in fixing on the proper spot where to plunge after her. When he came to the place, he raised himself again in the stream, and, calculating that she must by this time have been borne some distance from the spot where she sank, he gave a stroke or two down the river, and disappeared after her. This was followed by another cry of horror and despair; for, somehow, the idea of desolation which marks, at all times, a deep, over-swollen torrent, heightened

by the bleak mountain scenery around them, and the dark, angry voracity of the river where they had sunk, might have impressed the spectators with utter hopelessness as to the fate of those now engulfed in its vortex. This, however, I leave to those who are deeper read in philosophy than I am.

"An awful silence succeeded the last shrill exclamation, broken only by the hoarse rushing of the waters, whose wild, continuous roar, booming hollowly and dismally in the ear, might be heard at a great distance over all the country. But a new sensation soon invaded the multitude; for, after the lapse of about a minute, John O'Callaghan emerged from the flood, bearing, in his sinister hand, the body of his own Rose Galh—for it's he that loved her tenderly. A peal of joy congratulated them from a thousand voices; hundreds of directions were given to him how to act to the best advantage. Two young men in especial, who were both dying about the lovely creature that he held, were quite anxious to give advice.

"Bring her to the other side, John, ma bouchal; it's the safest,' said Larry Carty.

"'Will you let him alone, Carty?' said Simon Tracy, who was the other. 'You'll only put him in a perplexity.'

"But Carty should order in spite of everything. He kept bawling out, however, so loud, that John raised his eye to see what he meant, and was near losing hold of Rose. This was too much for Tracy, who ups with his fist, and downs him—so they both at it; for no one there could take themselves off those that were in danger, to interfere between them. But, at all events, no earthly thing can happen among Irishmen without a fight.

"The father, during this, stood breathless, his hands clasped, and his eyes turned to heaven, praying in anguish for the delivery of his darling. The mother's look was still wild and fixed, her eyes glazed, and her muscles hard and stiff; evidently she was insensible to all that was going forward; while large drops of paralytic agony hung upon her cold brow. Neither of the sisters had yet recovered, nor could those who supported them turn their eyes from the more imminent danger, to pay them any particular attention. Many, also, of the other females, whose feelings were too much wound up when the accident occurred, now fainted, when they saw she was likely to be rescued; but most of them were weeping with delight and gratitude.

"When John brought her to the surface, he paused a moment to recover breath and collectedness; he then caught her by the left arm, near the shoulder, and cut, in a slanting direction, down the stream, to a watering-place, where a slope had been formed in the bank. But he was already too far down to be able to work across the stream to this point—for it was here much stronger and more rapid than under the planks. Instead, therefore, of reaching the slope, he found himself, in spite of every effort to the contrary, about a perch below it; and except he could gain this point, against the strong rush of the flood, there was very little hope of being able to save either her or himself—for he was now much exhausted.

"Hitherto, therefore, all was still doubtful, whilst strength was fast failing him. In this trying and almost helpless situation, with an admirable presence of mind, he adopted the only expedient which could possibly enable him to reach the bank. On finding himself receding down, instead of advancing up, the current, he approached the bank, which was here very deep and perpendicular; he then sank his fingers into the firm blue clay with which it was stratified, and by this means advanced, bit by bit, up the stream, having no other force by which to propel himself against it. After this mode did he breast the current with all his strength—which must have been prodigious, or he never could have borne it out—until he reached the slope, and got from the influence of the tide, into dead water. On arriving here, his hand was caught by one of the young men present, who stood up to the neck, waiting his approach. A second man stood behind him, holding his other hand, a link being thus formed, that reached out to the firm bank; and a good pull now brought them both to the edge of the liquid. On finding bottom, John took his Colleen Galh in his own arms, carried her out, and pressing his lips to hers, laid her in the bosom of her father; then after taking another kiss of the young drowned flower, he burst into tears, and fell powerless beside her. The truth is, the spirit that kept him firm was now exhausted; both his legs and arms having become nerveless by the exertion.

"Hitherto her father took no notice of John, for how could he? seeing that he was entirely wrapped up in his daughter; and the question was, though rescued from the flood, if life was in her. The sisters were by this time recovered, and weeping over her, along with the father—and, indeed, with all present; but the mother could not be made to comprehend what they were about, at all at all. The country people used every means with which they were intimate to recover Rose; she was brought instantly to a farmer's house beside the spot, put into a warm bed, covered over with hot sálts, wrapped in half-scorched blankets, and made subject to every other mode of treatment that could possibly revoke the functions of life. John had now got a dacent draught of whisky, which revived him. He stood over her, when he could be admitted, watching for the symptomatics of her revival; all, however, was vain. He now determined to try another course: by-and-by he stooped, put his mouth to her mouth, and, drawing in his breath, respired with all his force from the bottom of his very heart into hers; this he did several times rapidly—faith, a tender and agreeable operation, anyhow. But mark the consequence: in less than a minute her white bosom heaved—her breath returned—her pulse began to play, she opened her eyes, and felt his tears of love raining warmly on her pale cheek!

"For years before this, no two of these opposite factions had spoken; nor up to this minute had John and they, even upon this occasion, exchanged a monosyllable. The father now looked at him—the tears stood afresh in his eyes; he came forward—stretched out his hand—it was received; and the next moment he fell into John's arms, and cried like an infant.

"When Rose recovered, she seemed as if striving to recordate what had happened; and after two or three minutes, inquired from her sister, in a weak but sweet voice, 'Who saved me?'

"'Twas John O'Callaghan, Rose darling,' replied the sister, in tears, 'that ventured his own life into the boiling flood, to save yours—and did save it, jewel.'

"Rose's eye glanced at John;—and I only wish, as I am a bachelor not further than my forty-seventh, that I may ever have the happiness to get such a glance from two blue eyes; as she gave him that moment a faint smile played about her mouth, and a slight blush lit up her fair cheek, like the evening sunbeams on the virgin snow, as the poets have said, for the five hundredth time, to my own personal knowledge. She then extended her hand, which John, you may be sure, was no way backward in receiving, and the tears of love and gratitude ran silently down her cheeks.

"It is not necessary to detail the circumstances of this day further; let it be sufficient to say that a reconciliation took place between those two branches of the O'Hallaghan and O'Callaghan families, in consequence of John's heroism and Rose's soft persuasion, and that there was also every perspective of the two factions being penultimately amalgamated. For nearly a century they had been pell-mell at it, whenever and wherever they could meet. Their forefathers, who had been engaged in the lawsuit about the island which I have mentioned, were dead and petrified in their graves; and the little peninsula in the glen was gradationally worn away by the river, till nothing remained but a desert, upon a small scale, of sand and gravel. Even the ruddy, able-bodied Squire, with the longitudinal nose projecting out of his face like a broken arch, and the small, fiery magistrate, both of whom had fought the duel, for the purpose of setting forth a good example, and bringing the dispute to a *peaceable* conclusion, were also dead. The very memory of the original contention had been lost, (except that it was preserved along with the cranium of my grandfather) or became so indistinct that the parties fastened themselves on some more modern provocation, which they kept in view until another fresh motive would start up, and so on. I know not, however, whether it was fair to expect them to give up at once the agreeable recreation of fighting. It's not easy to abolish old customs, particularly diversions; and everyone knows that this is the national amusement of the finest peasantry on the face of the earth.

"There were, it is true, many among both factions who saw the matter in this reasonable light, and who wished rather, if it were to cease, that it should die away by degrees, from the battle of the whole parish, equally divided between the factions, to the subordinate row between certain members of them—from that to the faint broil of certain families, and so on, to the single-handed play between individuals. At all events, one-half of them were for peace, and two-thirds of them equally divided between peace and war.

"For three months after the accident which befell Rose Galh O'Hallaghan, both factions had been tolentary quiet: that is to say,

they had no general engagement. Some slight skirmishes certainly did take place on market nights, when the drop was in, and the spirits up ; but in those neither John nor Rose's immediate families took any part. The fact was that John and Rose were on the evening of matrimony ; the match had been made, the day appointed, and every other necessary stipulation ratified. Now, John was as fine a young man as you would meet in a day's travelling ; and as for Rose, her name went far and near for beauty ; and with justice, for the sun never shone on a fairer, meeker, or modester virgin than Rose Galh O'Hallaghan.

"It might be, indeed, that there were those on both sides who thought that, if the marriage was obstructed, their own sons and daughters would have a better chance. Rose had many admirers ; they might have envied John his happiness : many fathers, on the other side, might have wished their sons to succeed with Rose. Whether I am sinister in this conjecture is more than I can say. I grant, indeed, that a great portion of it is speculation on my part. The wedding-day, however, was arranged ; but unfortunately, the fair day of Knockimdowney occurred, in the rotation of natural time, precisely one week before it. I know not from what motive it proceeded, but the factions on both sides were never known to make a more light-hearted preparation for battle. Cudgels of all sorts and sizes (and some of them, to my own knowledge, great beauties) were provided.

"I believe, I may as well take this opportunity of saying, that real Irish cudgels must be root-growing, either oak, black-thorn, or crab-tree—although crab-tree, by the way, is apt to fly. They should not be too long—three feet and a few inches is an accommodating length. They must be naturally top-heavy, and have around the end, that is to make acquaintance with the cranium, three or four natural lumps, calculated to divide the flesh in the natest manner, and to leave, if possible, the smallest taste in life of pit in the skull. But if a good root-growing *kippeen* be light at the fighting end, or possess not the proper number of knobs, a hole a few inches deep is to be bored in the end, which must be filled with melted lead. This gives it a widow-and-orphan-making quality, a child-bereaving touch, altogether very desirable. If, however, the top splits in the boring, which, in awkward hands, is not uncommon, the defect may be remediated by putting on an iron ferrule, and driving two or three strong nails into it, simply to preserve it from flying off ; not that an Irishman is ever at a loss for weapons when in a fight ; for so long as a scythe, flail, spade, pitch-fork, or stone is at hand, he feels quite contented with the lot of war. No man, as they say of great statesmen, is more fertile in expedients during a row ; which, by the way, I take to be a good quality, at all events.

"I remember the fair day of Knockimdowney well : it has kept me from griddle-bread and tough nutriment ever since. Hard fortune to Jack Roe O'Hallaghan ! No man had better teeth than I had, till I met with him that day. He fought stoutly on his own side ; but he was *ped* then for the same basting that fell to me, though not by my

hands: if to get his jaw dacently divided into three halves could be called a fair liquidation of an old debt—it was equal to twenty shillings in the pound, anyhow.

"There had not been a larger fair in the town of Knockimdowney for years. The day was dark and sunless, but sultry. On looking through the crowd, I could see no man without a cudgel; yet, what was strange, there was no certainty of any sport. Several desultory scrimmages had locality; but they were altogether sequestered from the great factions of the O's. Except that it was pleasant, and stirred one's blood to look at them, or occasioned the cudgels to be grasped more firmly, there was no personal interest felt by any of us in them; they therefore began and ended, here and there, through the fair, like mere flashes in the pan, dying in their own smoke.

"The blood of every prolific nation is naturally hot; but when that hot blood is inflamed by ardent spirits, it is not to be supposed that men should be cool; and, God he knows, there is not on the level surface of this habitable globe a nation that has been so thoroughly inflamed by *ardent spirits* as Ireland.

"Up till four o'clock that day, the factions were quiet. Several relations on both sides had been invited to drink by John and Rose's families, for the purpose of establishing a good feeling between them. But this was, after all, hardly to be expected, for they hated one another with an ardency much too good-humoured and buoyant; and, between ourselves, to bring Paddy over a bottle is a very equivocal mode of giving him an anti-cudgelling disposition. After the hour of four, several of the factions were getting very friendly, which I knew at the time to be a bad sign. Many of them nodded to each other, which I knew to be a worse one; and some of them shook hands with the greatest cordiality, which I no sooner saw than I slipped the knot of my cravat, and held myself in preparation for the sport.

"I have often had occasion to remark—and few men, let me tell you, had finer opportunities of doing so—the differential symptomatics between a Party Fight, that is, a battle between Orangemen and Ribbonmen, and one between two Roman Catholic Factions. There is something infinitely more anxious, silent, and deadly in the compressed vengeance, and the hope of slaughter, which characterise a *party fight*, than is to be seen in a battle between *factions*. The truth is, the enmity is not so deep and well-grounded in the latter as in the former. The feeling is not political nor religious between the factions; whereas, in the other it is both, which is a mighty great advantage; for when this is adjuncted to an intense personal hatred, and a sense of wrong, probably arising from a too intimate recollection of the leaded blackthorn, or the awkward death of some relative by the musket or the bayonet, it is apt to produce very purty fighting, and much respectable retribution.

"In a party fight, a prophetic sense of danger hangs, as it were, over the crowd—the very air is loaded with apprehension; and the vengeance-burst is preceded by a close, thick darkness, almost

sulphury, that is more terrifical than the conflict itself, though clearly less dangerous and fatal. The scowl of the opposing parties, the blanched cheeks, the knit brows, and the grinding teeth, not pretermitting the deadly gleams that shoot from their kindled eyes, are ornaments which a plain battle between factions cannot boast, but which, notwithstanding, are very suitable to the fierce and gloomy silence of that premeditated vengeance, which burns with such intensity on the heart, and scorches up the vitals into such a thirst for blood. Not but they come by different means to the same conclusion; because it is the feeling, and not altogether the manner of operation, that is different.

"Now a faction fight doesn't resemble this, at all at all. Paddy's at home here; all song, dance, good-humour, and affection. His cheek is flushed with delight, which, indeed, may derive assistance from the consciousness of having no bayonets or loaded carabines to contend with: but, anyhow, he's at home—his eye is lit with real glee —he tosses his hat in the air, in the height of mirth—and leaps, like a mountebank, two yards from the ground. Then with what a graciuos dexterity he brandishes his cudgel!—what a joyous spirit is heard in his shout at the face of a friend from another faction! His very 'whoo!' is contagious, and would make a man, that had settled on running away, return and join the sport with an appetite truly Irish. He is, in fact, while under the influence of this heavenly *afflatus*, in love with everyone—man, woman, and child. If he meet his sweetheart, he will give her a kiss and a hug, and that with double kindness, because he is on his way to thrash her father or brother. It is the *acumen* of his enjoyment; and woe be to him who will adventure to go between him and his amusements. To be sure, skulls and bones are broken, and lives lost; but they are lost in pleasant fighting—they are the consequences of the sport, the beauty of which consists in breaking as many heads and necks as you can; and certainly when a man enters into the spirit of any exercise, there is nothing like elevating himself to the point of excellence. Then a man ought never to be disheartened. If you lose this game, or get your head good-humourly beaten to pieces, why you may win another, or your friends may mollify two or three skulls as a set-off to yours—but that is nothing.

"When the evening became more advanced, maybe, considering the poor look up there was for anything like decent sport—maybe, in the early part of the day, it wasn't the delightful sight to see the boys on each side of the two great factions beginning to get frolicksome. Maybe the songs and the shouting, when they began, hadn t melody and music in them, anyhow! People may talk about harmony; but what harmony is equal to that in which five or six hundred men sing and shout, and leap and caper at each other, as a prelude to neighbourly fighting, where they beat time upon the drums of each other's ears and heads with oak drum-sticks? That's an Irishman's music; and hard fortune to the *garran* that wouldn't have friendship and kindness in him to join and play a *stave* along with them! 'Whoo! your sowl! Hurroo! Success to our side! Hi for the O'Callaghans!

Where's the blackguard to—' I beg pardon, decent reader—I forgot myself for a moment, or rather I got new life in me, for I am nothing at all at all for the last five months—a kind of nonentity, I may say, ever since that vagabond Burgess occasioned me to pay a visit to my distant relations, till my friends get that last matter of the collar-bone settled.

"The impulse which *faction* fighting gives trade and business in Ireland is truly surprising; whereas *party* fighting depreciates both. As soon as it is perceived that a *party* fight is to be expected, all buying and selling are suspended for the day, and those who are not *up*,[1] and even many who are, take themselves and their property home as quickly as may be convenient. But in a *faction* fight, as soon as there is any perspective of a row, depend upon it, there is quick work at all kinds of negotiation; and truly there is nothing like brevity and decision in buying and selling; for which reason faction fighting, at all events, if only for the sake of national prosperity, should be encouraged and kept up.

"Towards five o'clock, if a man was placed on an exalted station, so that he could look at the crowd, *and wasn't able to fight*, he could have seen much that a man might envy him for. Here a hat went up, or maybe a dozen of them; then followed a general huzza. On the other side, two dozen *caubeens* sought the sky, like so many scaldy crows attempting their own element for the first time, only they were not so black. Then another shout, which was answered by that of their friends on the opposite side; so that you would hardly know which side huzzaed loudest, the blending of both was so truly symphonious. Now there was a shout for the face of an O'Callaghan: this was prosecuted on the very heels by another for the face of an O'Hallaghan. Immediately a man of the O'Hallaghan side doffed his tattered frieze, and catching it by the very extremity of the sleeve, drew it, with a tact known only by an initiation of half a dozen street days, up the pavement after him. On the instant, a blade from the O'Callaghan side *peeled* with equal alacrity, and stretching his *home-made* at full length after him, proceeded triumphantly up the street to meet the other.

"Thundher-an-ages, what's this for, at all at all! I wish I hadn't begun to manuscript an account of it, anyhow; 'tis like a hungry man dreaming of a good dinner at a feast, and afterwards awaking and finding his front ribs and back-bone on the point of union. Reader, is that a blackthorn you carry—tut, where is my imagination bound for?—to meet the other, I say.

"'Where's the rascally *O'Callaghan* that will place his toe or his shillely on this frieze?' 'Is there no blackguard *O'Hallaghan* jist to look *crucked* at the coat of an O'Callaghan, or say black's the white of his eye?'

"'Throth and there is, Ned, avourneen, that same on the sod here.'

[1] Initiated into Whiteboyism.

"'Is that Barney?'

"'The same, Ned, ma bouchal—and how is your mother's son, Ned?'

"'In good health at the present time, thank God and you, how is yourself, Barney?'

"'Can't complain as time goes; only take this, anyhow, to mend your health, ma bouchal'—(whack).

"'Success, Barney, and here's at your sarvice, avick, not making little of what I got—any way'—(crack).

"About five o'clock on a May evening, in the fair of Knockimdowney, was the ice thus broken, with all possible civility, by Ned and Barney. The next moment a general rush took place towards the scene of action, and ere you could bless yourself, Barney and Ned were both down, weltering in their own and each other's blood. I scarcely know, indeed, though with a mighty respectable quota of experimentality myself, how to describe what followed. For the first twenty minutes the general harmony of this fine row might be set to music, according to a scale something like this:—Whick whack—crick crack—whick whack—crick crack—&c. &c. &c. 'Here yer sowl—(crack)—there yer sowl—(whack). Whoo for the O'Hallaghans!'—(crack, crack, crack). 'Hurroo for the O'Callaghans!—(whack, whack, whack). The O'Callaghans for ever!'—(whack). 'The O'Hallaghans for ever!'—(crack). 'Murther! murther!—(crick, crack)—foul! foul!—(whick, whack). Blood and turf!—(whack, whick)—tunther-an-ouns'—(crack, crick). 'Hurroo! my darlings! handle your skippeens—(crack, crack)—the O'Hallaghans are going!'—(whack, whack).

"You are to suppose them here to have been at it for about half an hour.

"Whack, crack—'Oh—oh—oh! have mercy upon me, boys—(crack—a shriek of murther! murther!—crack, crack, whack)—my life—my life—(crack, crack—whack, whack)—oh! for the sake of the living Father!—for the sake of my wife and childher, Ned Hallaghan, spare my life.'

"'So we will, but take this, anyhow'— (whack, crack, whack, crack).

"'Oh! for the love of God, don't kill—' (whack, crack, whack.) 'Oh!'—(crack, crack, whack—*dies*).

"'Huzza! huzza! huzza!' from the O'Hallaghans. 'Bravo, boys! there's one of them done for. Whoo! my darlings—hurroo! the O'Hallaghans for ever!'

"The scene now changes to the O'Callaghan side.

"'Jack—Oh, Jack, avourneen—hell to their sowls for murdherers—Paddy's killed—his skull's smashed—Revinge, boys, Paddy O'Callaghan's killed! On with you, O'Callaghans—on with you—on with you, Paddy O'Callaghan's murdhered—take to the stones—that's it—keep it up—down with him! Success!—he's the bloody villain that didn't show him marcy—that's it. Tundher-an'-ouns, is it laving him that way you are afther—let me at him!'

"'Here's a stone, Tom!'

"'No, no, this stick has the lead in it—it'll do him, never fear!'

"'Let him alone, Barney, he got enough.'

"'By the powdhers, it's myself that won't; didn't he kill Paddy?—(crack, crack). Take that, you murdhering thief!'—(whack, whack).

"'Oh!—(whack, crack)—my head—I'm killed—I'm'—(crack—*kicks the bucket*).

"'Now, your sowl, that does you, any way—(crack, whack)—hurroo!—huzza!—huzza! Man for man, boys—an O'Hallaghan's done for—whoo! for our side—tol-deroll, lol-deroll, tow, row, row—huzza!—huzza!—tol-deroll, lol-deroll, tow, row, row—huzza! for the O'Callaghans.'

"From this moment the battle became delightful; it was now pelt and welt on both sides, but many of the kippeens were broken—many of the boys had their fighting arms disabled by a dislocation or bit of fracture, and those weren't equal to more than doing a little upon such as were down.

"In the midst of the din, such a dialogue as this might be heard:—

"'Larry, you're after being done for, for this day.' (Whack, crack).

"'Only an eye gone—is that Mickey?'—(whick, whack, crick, crack).

"'That's it, my darlings!—you may say that, Larry—'tis my mother's son that's in it—(crack, crack, a general huzza. Mickey and Larry) huzza! huzza! huzza for the O'Hallaghans!—What have *you* got, Larry?'—(crack, crack).

"'Only the bone of my arm, God be praised for it, very purtily snapt across!'—(whack, whack).

"'Is that all? Well, some people have luck!'—(crack, crack, crack).

"'Why, I've no reason to complain, thank God—(whack, crack)—purty play that, any way—Paddy O'Callaghan's settled—did you hear it?—(whack, whack, another shout)—That's it, boys—handle the shillelegs!—Success, O'Hallaghans—down with the bloody O'Callaghans!'

"'I did hear it; so is Jem O'Hallaghan—(crack, whack, whack, crack)—you're not able to get up, I see—tare-an'-ounty, is'nt it a pleasure to hear that play?—What ails you?'

"'Oh, Larry, I'm in great pain, and getting very weak, entirely'—(*faints*).

"'Faix, and he's settled, too, I'm thinking.'

"'Oh, murdher, my arm!' (One of the O'Callaghans attacks him—(crack, crack).

"'Take that, you bagabone!'—(whack, whack.)

"'Murdher, murdher, is it striking a *down* man you're after?—foul, foul, and my arm broke!'—(Crack, crack).

"'Take that, with what you got before, and it'll ase you, maybe.'

"(A party of the O'Hallaghans attack the man who is beating him.)

"'Murdher, murdher!'—(crack, whack, whack, crack, crack, whack).

"'Lay on him, your sowls to pirdition—lay on him, hot and heavy—give it to him! He sthruck me, and me down wid my broken arm!'

"'Foul, ye thieves of the world!—(from the O'Callaghan)—foul!—five against one—give me fair play!—(crack, crack, crack)—Oh!—(whack)—Oh, oh, oh!'—(falls senseless, covered with blood).

"'Ha, hell's cure to you, you bloody thief; you didn't spare me, with my arm broke.—(Another general shout.) 'Bad end to it, isn't it a poor case entirely, that I can't even throw up my caubeen, let alone join in the divarsion.'

"Both parties now rallied, and ranged themselves along the street, exhibiting a firm, compact phalanx, wedged close against each other, almost foot to foot. The mass was thick and dense, and the tug of conflict stiff, wild, and savage. Much natural skill and dexterity were displayed in their mutual efforts to preserve their respective ranks unbroken, and as the sallies and charges were made on both sides, the temporary rush, the indentation of the multitudinous body, and the rebound into its original position gave an undulating appearance to the compact mass—reeking, groaning, dragging, and huzzaing—as it was, that resembled the serpentine motion of a rushing waterspout in the cloud.

"The women now began to take part with their brothers and sweethearts. Those who had no bachelors among the opposite factions fought along with their brothers; others did not scruple even to assist in giving their enamoured swains the father of a good beating. Many, however, were more faithful to love than to natural affection, and these sallied out, like heroines, under the banners of their sweethearts, fighting with amazing prowess against their friends and relations; nor was it at all extraordinary to see two sisters engaged on opposite sides—perhaps tearing each other, as, with dishevelled hair, they screamed with a fury that was truly exemplary. Indeed, it is no untruth to assert that the women do much valuable execution. Their manner of fighting is this—as soon as the fair one decides upon taking a part in the row, she instantly takes off her apron or her stocking, stoops down, and lifting the first four pounder she can get, puts it in the corner of her apron, or the foot of her stocking, if it has a foot, and marching into the scene of action, lays about her right and left. Upon my credibility, they are extremely useful and handy, and can give mighty nate knock-downs—inasmuch as no guard that a man is acquainted with can ward off their blows. Nay, what is more, it often happens, when a son-in-law is in a faction against his father-in-law and his wife's people generally, that if he and his wife's brother meet, the wife will clink him with the *pet* in her apron, downing her own husband with great skill, for it is not always that marriage extinguishes the hatred of factions; and very often 'tis the brother that is humiliated.

"Up to the death of these two men, John O'Callaghan and Rose's father, together with a large party of their friends on both sides, were drinking in a public-house, determined to take no portion in the fight, at all at all. Poor Rose, when she heard the shouting and terrible strokes, got as pale as death, and sat close to John, whose hand she

captured in hers, beseeching him, and looking up in his face with the most imploring sincerity as she spoke, not to go out among them : the tears falling all the time from her fine eyes, the mellow flashes of which, when John's pleasantry in soothing her would seduce a smile, went into his very heart. But when, on looking out of the window where they sat, two of the opposing factions heard that a man on each side was killed ; and when, on ascertaining the names of the individuals, and of those who murdered them, it turned out that one of the murdered men was brother to a person in the room, and his murderer uncle to one of those in the window, it was not in the pow'r of man or woman to keep them asunder, particularly as they were all rather advanced in liquor. In an instant the friends of the murdered man made a rush to the window, before any pacifiers had time to get between them, and catching the nephew of him who had committed the murder, hurled him headforemost upon the stone pavement, where his skull was dashed to pieces, and his brains scattered about the flags !

"A general attack instantly took place in the room between the two factions ; but the apartment was too low and crowded to permit of proper fighting, so they rushed out to the street, shouting and yelling, as they do when the battle comes to the *real* point of doing business. As soon as it was seen that the heads of the O'Callaghans and O'Hallaghans were at work as well as the rest, the fight was recommenced with retrebled spirit ; but when the mutilated body of the man who had been flung from the window was observed lying in a pool of his own proper brains and blood, such a cry arose among his friends, as would *cake*[1] the vital fluid in the veins of anyone not a party in the quarrel. Now was the work—the moment of interest—men and women groaning, staggering, and lying insensible ; others shouting, leaping, and huzzaing ; some singing, and not a few able-bodied spalpeens blurting, like overgrown children, on seeing their own blood ; many raging and roaring about like bulls ;—all this formed such a group as a faction fight, and nothing else, could represent.

"The battle now blazed out afresh ; all kinds of instruments were now pressed into the service. Some got flails, some spades, some shovels, and one man got his hands upon a scythe, with which, unquestionably, he would have taken more lives than one ; but, very fortunately, as he sallied out to join the crowd, he was politely visited in the back of the head by a brick-bat, which had a mighty convincing way with it of giving him a peaceable disposition, for he instantly lay down, and did not seem at all anxious as to the result of the battle. The O'Hallaghans were now compelled to give way, owing principally to the introvention of John O'Callaghan, who, although he was as good as sworn to take no part in the contest, was compelled to fight merely to protect himself. But, blood-and-turf ! when he *did* begin, he was dreadful. As soon as his party saw him engaged, they took fresh

[1] Harden.

courage, and in a short time made the O'Hallaghans retreat up the churchyard. I never saw anything equal to John ; he absolutely sent them down in dozens : and when a man would give him any inconvenience with the stick, he would *down* him with the fist, for right and left were all alike to him. Poor Rose's brother and he met, both roused like two lions ; but when John saw who it was, he held back his hand.

"'No, Tom,' says he, 'I'll not strike you, for Rose's sake I'm not fighting through ill will to you or your family ; so take another direction, for I can't strike you.'

"The blood, however, was unfortunately up in Tom.

"'We'll decide it now,' said he ; 'I'm as good a man as you, O'Callaghan ; and let me whisper this in your ear—you'll never warm the one bed with Rose, while God's in heaven—it's past that now—there can be nothing but blood between us !'

"At this juncture two of the O'Callaghans ran with their shillelaghs up, to beat down Tom on the spot.

"'Stop, boys !' said John, 'you musn't touch him ; he had no hand in the quarrel. Go, boys, if you respect me ; lave him to myself.'

"The boys withdrew to another part of the fight ; and the next instant Tom struck the very man that interfered to save him across the temple, and cut him severely. John put his hand up, and staggered.

"'I'm sorry for this,' he observed ; "but it's now self-defence with me,' and, at the same moment, with one blow, he left Tom O'Hallaghan stretched insensible on the street.

"On the O'Hallaghans being driven to the churchyard, they were at a mighty great inconvenience for weapons. Most of them had lost their sticks, it being a usage in fights of this kind to twist the cudgels from the grasp of the beaten men, to prevent them from rallying. They soon, however, furnished themselves with the best they could find, videlicet, the skull, leg, thigh and arm bones, which they found lying about the graveyard. This was a new species of weapon, for which the majority of the O'Callaghans were scarcely prepared. Out they sallied in a body—some with these, others with stones, and, making fierce assault upon their enemies, absolutely *druv* them back —not so much by the damage they were doing, as by the alarm and terror which these unexpected species of missiles excited.

"At this moment, notwithstanding the fatality that had taken place, nothing could be more truly comical and facetious than the appearance of the field of battle. Skulls were flying in every direction—so thick, indeed, that it might with truth be asseverated that many who were petrified in the dust had their skulls broken in this great battle between the factions.—God help poor Ireland ! when its inhabitants are so pugnacious that even the grave is no security against getting their crowns cracked, and their bones fractured ! Well, anyhow, skulls and bones flew in every direction ; stones aad brick-bats were also put in motion ; spades, shovels, loaded whips, pot-sticks, churn-staffs, flails, and all kinds of available weapons were in hot employment.

"But, perhaps, there was nothing more truly felicitous or original in its way than the mode of warfare adopted by little Neal Malone, who was tailor for the O'Callaghan side; for every tradesman is obliged to fight on behalf of his own faction. Big Frank Farrell, the miller, being on the O'Hallaghan side, had been sent for, and came up from his mill behind the town, quite fresh. He was never what could be called a *good man*,[1] though it was said that he could lift ten hundredweight. He puffed forward with a great cudgel, determined to commit slaughter out of the face, and the first man he met was the *weeshy* fraction of a tailor, as nimble as a hare. He immediately attacked him, and would probably have taken his measure for life, had not the tailor's activity protected him. Farrell was in a rage; and Neal, taking advantage of his blind fury, slipt round him, and, with a short run, sprang upon the miller's back, and planted a foot upon the threshold of each coat pocket, holding by the mealy collar of his waistcoat. In this position he belaboured the miller's face and eyes with his little hard fist to such purpose that he had him in the course of a few minutes nearly as blind as a mill-horse. The miller roared for assistance, but the pell-mell was going on too warmly for his cries to be available. In fact, he resembled an elephant with a monkey on his back.

"'How do you like that, Farrell?' Neal would say—giving him a cuff; 'and that, and that—but that is best of all. Take it again, gudgeon—(two cuffs more)—here's grist for you—(half a dozen additional) hard fortune to you!—(crack, crack). What! going to lie down! by all that's terrible, if you do, I'll *annigulate*[2] *you*. Here's a *dhuragh*[3] (another half dozen)—long measure, you savage—the *baker's* dozen, you baste; there's five-an'-twenty to the score, Sampson, and one or two in'—(crack, whack).

"'Oh! murther sheery!' shouted the miller—'murther-an-age, I'm kilt—foul play! foul play!'

"'You lie, big Nebuchodonosor, it's not—this is all *fair* play, you big baste—*fair* play, Sampson: by the same a-token, here's to jog your memory that it's the *Fair* day of Knockimdowney; *Irish Fair* play, you whale—but I'll whale you'—(crack, crack, whack).

"'Oh—oh!' shouted the miller.

"'Oh—Oh! is it? Oh, if I had my scissors here, till I'd clip your ears off, wouldn't I be the happy man, anyhow, you swab, you'—(whack, whack, crack).

"'Murther—murther—murther!'—shouted the miller—'is there no help?'

"'Help, is it? you may say that—(crack, crack); there's a trifle—

[1] A brave man.

[2] Annihilate. Many of the jawbreakers—and this was certainly such in a double sense—used by the Hedge-Schoolmasters are scattered among the people, by whom they are so twisted that it would be extremely difficult to recognise them.

[3] Dhuragh — an additional portion of anything thrown in from a spirit of generosity, after the measure agreed on is given. When the miller, for instance, receives his toll, the country people usually throw in several handsfull of meal as a *Dhuragh*.

a small taste in the *milling* style, you know ; and here goes to dislodge a *grinder*. Did ye ever hear of the tailor on horseback, Sampson ? eh ?—(whack, whack) : did you ever expect to see a tailor o' horseback of yourself, you baste—(crack). I tell you, if you offer to lie down, I'll *annigulate* you out o' the face.'

"Never, indeed, was a miller, before or since, so well dusted ; and I daresay Neal would have rode him long enough, but for an O'Hallaghan, who had gone into one of the houses to procure a weapon. This man was nearly as original in his choice of one as the tailor in the position which he selected for beating the miller. On entering the kitchen, he found that he had been anticipated ; there was neither tongs, poker, or churn-staff ; nor, in fact, anything wherewith he could assault his enemies : all had been carried off by others. There was, however, a goose in the action of being roasted on a spit at the fire. This was enough : honest O'Hallaghan saw nothing but the spit, which he accordingly seized, goose and all, making the best of his way, so armed, to the scene of battle. He just came out as the miller was once more roaring for assistance, and, to a dead certainty, would have spitted the tailor like a cock sparrow against the miller's carcase, had not his activity once more saved him. Unluckily, the unfortunate miller got the thrust behind, which was intended for Neal, and roared like a bull. He was beginning to shout 'Foul play,' when on turning round he perceived that the thrust was not intended for him, but for the tailor.

"'Give me that spit,' said he ; 'by all the mills that ever were turned, I'll spit the tailor this blessed minute beside the goose, and we'll roast them both together.'

"The other refused to part with the spit ; but the miller, seizing the goose, flung it with all his force after the tailor, who stooped, however, and avoided the blow.

"'No man has a better right to the goose than the tailor,' said Neal, as he took it up, and, disappearing, neither he nor the goose could be seen for the remainder of the day.

"The battle was now somewhat abated. Skulls, and bones, and bricks, and stones were, however, still flying ; so that it might be truly said the bones of contention were numerous. The streets presented a woeful spectacle : men were lying with their bones broken—others, though not so seriously injured, lappered in their blood—some were crawling up, but were instantly knocked down by their enemies—some were leaning against the walls, or groping their way silently along them, endeavouring to escape observation, lest they might be smashed down and altogether murdered. Wives were sitting with the bloody heads of their husbands in their laps, tearing their hair, weeping, and cursing, in all the gall of wrath, those who left them in such a state. Daughters performed the same offices to their fathers, and sisters to their brothers ; not pretermitting those who did not neglect their broken-pated bachelors, to whom they paid equal attention. Yet was the scene not without abundance of mirth. Many a hat was thrown up by the O'Callaghan side, who certainly gained the day. Many a

song was raised by those who tottered about with trickling sconces, half drunk with whisky, and half stupid with beating. Many a 'whoo,' and 'hurroo,' and 'huzza,' was sent forth by the triumphanters; but truth to tell, they were miserably feeble and faint, compared to what they had been in the beginning of the amusements—sufficiently evincing that, although they might boast of the name of victory, they had got a bellyful of beating;—still there was hard fighting.

"I mentioned, some time ago, that a man had adopted a scythe. I wish from my heart there had been no such bloody instrument there that day; but truth must be told. John O'Callaghan was now engaged against a set of the other O's, who had rallied for the third time and attacked him and his party. Another brother of Rose Galh's was in this engagement, and him did John O'Callaghan not only knock down, but cut desperately across the temple. A man, stripped, and covered with blood and dust, at that moment made his appearance, his hand bearing the blade of the aforesaid scythe. His approach was at once furious and rapid—and I may as well add, fatal; for before John O'Callaghan had time to be forewarned of his danger, he was cut down, the artery of his neck laid open, and he died without a groan. It was truly dreadful, even to the oldest fighter present, to see the strong rush of red blood that curvated about his neck, until it gurgled—gurgled—gurgled, and lappered, and bubbled out—ending in small red spouts, blackening and blackening, as they became fainter and more faint. At this criticality every eye was turned from the corpse to the murderer; but he had been instantly struck down, and a female, with a large stone in her apron, stood over him, her arms stretched out, her face horribly distorted with agony, and her eyes turned backwards, as it were, into her head. In a few seconds she fell into strong convulsions, and was immediately taken away. Alas! alas! it was Rose Galh; and when we looked at the man she had struck down, he was found to be her brother! flesh of her flesh, and blood of her blood! On examining him more closely, we discovered that his under-jaw hung loose, that his limbs were supple; we tried to make him speak, but in vain—he too was a corpse.

"The fact was, that in consequence of his being stripped, and covered by so much blood and dust, she knew him not; and impelled by her feelings to avenge herself, on the murderer of her lover, to whom she doubly owed her life, she struck him a deadly blow, without knowing him to be her brother. The shock produced by seeing her lover murdered—and the horror of finding that she herself, in avenging him, had taken her brother's life, was too much for a heart so tender as hers. On recovering from her convulsions, her senses were found to be gone for ever! Poor girl! she is still living; but from that moment to this she has never opened her lips to mortal. She is, indeed, a fair ruin, but silent, melancholy, and beautiful as the moon in the summer heaven. Poor Rose Galh! you, and many a mother, and father, and wife, and orphan, have had reason to maledict the *bloody Battles of the Factions!*

"With regard to my grandfather, he says that he didn't see purtier

fighting within his own memory ; nor since the fight between himself and Big Mucklemurray took place in the same town. But, to do him justice, he condemns the scythe and every other weapon except the cudgels ; because, he says, that if they continue to be resorted to, nate fighting will be altogether forgotten in the country."

THE PARTY FIGHT AND FUNERAL.

WE ought, perhaps, to inform our readers that the connection between a party fight and funeral is sufficiently strong to justify the author in classing them under the title which is prefixed to this story. The one, being usually the natural result of the other, is made to proceed from it, as is the custom in real life among the Irish. Such is the preface with which we deem it necessary to introduce the following sketch to those who shall honour us with a perusal.

It has long been laid down as a universal principle that self-preservation is the first law of nature. An Irishman, however, has nothing to do with this ; he disposes of it as he does of the other laws, and washes his hands out of it altogether. But commend him to a fair, dance, funeral, or wedding, or to any other sport where there is a likelihood of getting his head or his bones broken, and if he survive he will remember you, with a kindness peculiar to himself, to the last day of his life ; will drub you from head to heel if he finds that any misfortune has kept you out of a row beyond the usual period of three months ; will render the same service to any of your friends that stand in need of it ; or, in short, will go to the world's end, or fifty miles farther, as he himself would say, to serve you, provided you can procure him a bit of decent fighting. Now, in truth and soberness, it is difficult to account for this propensity, especially when the task of ascertaining it is assigned to those of another country, or even to those Irishmen whose rank in life places them too far from the customs, prejudices, and domestic opinions of their native peasantry—none of which can be properly known without mingling with them. To my own knowledge, however, it proceeds from *education.* And here I would beg leave to point out an omission of which the several boards of education have been guilty, and which, I believe, no one but myself has yet been sufficiently acute and philosophical to ascertain, as forming a *sine quâ non* in the national instruction of the lower orders of Irishmen.

The cream of the matter is this. A species of ambition prevails in the Green Isle not known in any other country. It is an ambition of about three miles by four in extent ; or, in other words, is bounded by the limits of the parish in which the subject of it may reside. It puts itself forth early in the character, and a hardy perennial it is. In my

own case its first development was noticed in the hedge-school which I attended. I had not been long there till I was forced to declare myself either for the Caseys or the Murphys, two tiny factions that had split the school between them. The day on which the ceremony of my declaration took place was a solemn one. After school, we all went to the bottom of a deep valley, a short distance from the school-house. Up to the moment of our assembling there, I had not taken my stand under either banner: that of the Caseys was a sod of turf stuck on the end of a broken fishing-rod—the eagle of the Murphys was a cork-red potato, hoisted in the same manner. The turf was borne by an urchin who afterwards distinguished himself at fairs and markets as a *builla batthah*[1] of the first grade, and from this circumstance he was nicknamed *Parrah Rackhan*.[2] The potato was borne by little Mickle M'Phaudeen Murphy, who afterwards took away Katty Bane Sheridan, without asking her own consent or her father's. They were all then boys, it is true, but they gave a tolerable promise of that eminence which they subsequently attained.

When we arrived at the bottom of the glen, the Murphys and the Caseys, including their respective followers, ranged themselves on either side of a long line which was drawn between the belligerent powers with the butt-end of one of the standards. Exactly on this line was I placed. The word was then put to me in full form—"Whether will you side with the dacent Caseys or the blackguard Murphys?" "Whether will you side with the dacent Murphys or the blackguard Caseys?" "The potato for ever!" said I, throwing up my caubeen, and running over to the Murphy standard. In the twinkling of an eye we were at it; and in a short time the deuce an eye some of us had to twinkle. A battle royal succeeded that lasted near half an hour, and it would probably have lasted about double the time were it not for the appearance of the "master," who was seen by a little shrivelled *vidette*, who wanted an arm, and could take no part in the engagement. This was enough; we instantly radiated in all possible directions, so that by the time he had descended through the intricacies of the glen to the field of battle, neither victor nor vanquished was visible, except, perhaps, a straggler or two as they topped the brow of the declivity, looking back over their shoulders to put themselves out of doubt as to their visibility by the master. They seldom looked in vain, however; for there he usually stood, shaking up his rod, silently prophetic of its application on the following day. This threat, for the most part, ended in smoke; for except he horsed about forty or fifty of us, the infliction of impartial justice was utterly out of his power.

But, besides this, there never was a realm in which the evils of a divided cabinet were more visible: the truth is, the monarch himself was under the influence of female government—an influence which he felt it either contrary to his inclination or beyond his power to throw off. "Poor Norah, long may *you reign*," we often used to exclaim, to

[1] Cudgel Player. [2] Paddy Riot.

he visible mortification of the "master," who felt the benevolence of the wish bottomed upon an indirect want of allegiance to himself. Well, it was a *touching* scene !—how we used to stand with the waistbands of our smallclothes cautiously grasped in our hands, with a timid show of resistance, our brave red faces slobbered over with tears, as we stood naked for execution ! Never was there a finer specimen of deprecation in eloquence than we then exhibited—the supplicating look right up into the master's face—the touching modulation of the whine—the additional tightness and caution with which we grasped the waistbands with one hand, when it was necessary to use the other in wiping our eyes and noses with the polished sleeve-cuff—the sincerity and vehemence with which we promised never to be guilty again, still shrewdly including the condition of present impunity for our offence :—"this—one—time—master, if ye plaise, sir;" and the utter hopelessness and despair which were legible in the last groan, as we grasped the "master's" leg in utter recklessness of judgment, were all perfect in their way. Reader, have you ever got a reprieve from the gallows? I beg pardon, my dear sir; I only meant to ask, are you capable of entering into what a personage of that description might be supposed to feel, on being informed, after the knot had been neatly tied under the left ear, and the cap drawn over his eyes, that his Majesty had granted him a full pardon? But you remember your own schoolboy days, and that's enough.

The nice discrimination with which Norah used to time her interference was indeed surprising. God help us ! limited was our experience, and shallow our little judgments, or we might, with less trouble than Sir Humphry Davy deciphered the Herculaneum MSS., have known what the master meant, when, with the upraised arm hung over us, his eye was fixed upon the door of the kitchen, waiting for Norah's appearance.

Long, my fair and virtuous countrywomen—I repeat it to you all, as I did to Norah—may you reign in the hearts and affections of your husbands (but nowhere else), the grace, ornaments, and happiness of their hearths and lives, you jewels, you ! You are paragons of all that's good, and your feelings are highly creditable to yourselves and to humanity.

When Norah advanced, with her brawny uplifted arm (for she was a powerful woman) and forbidding aspect, to interpose between us and the avenging terrors of the birch, do you think that she did not reflect honour on her sex and the national character? I sink the base allusion to the *miscaum* of fresh butter, which we had placed in her hands that morning, or the dish of eggs, or of meal, which we had either begged or stolen at home, as a present for her; disclaiming, at the same time, the rascally idea of giving it from any motive beneath the most lofty-minded and disinterested generosity on our part.

Then, again, never did a forbidding face shine with so winning and amicable an expression as did hers on that merciful occasion. The sun dancing a hornpipe on Easter Sunday morning, or the full moon sailing as proud as a peacock in a new halo head-dress, was a very

disrespectable sight, compared to Norah's red beaming face, shrouded in her dowd cap with long ears, that descended to her masculine and substantial neck. Owing to her influence, the whole economy of the school was good; for we were permitted to cuff one another, and do whatever we pleased, with impunity, *if* we brought the meal, eggs, or butter; except some scapegoat who was not able to accomplish this, and he generally received on his own miserable carcase what was due to us all.

Poor Jack Murray! His last words on the scaffold, for being concerned in the murder of Pierce, the gauger, were, that he got the first of his bad habits under Pat Mulligan and Norah—that he learned to steal by secreting at home butter and meal to paste up the master's eyes to his bad conduct—and that his fondness for quarrelling arose from being permitted to head a faction at school; a most ungrateful return for the many acts of grace which the indulgence of Norah caused to be issued in his favour.

I was but a short time under Pat, when, after the general example, I had my cudgel, which I used to carry regularly to a certain furze bush within fifty perches of the "seminary," where I hid it till after "dismiss." I grant it does not look well in me to become my own panegyrist; but I can at least declare that there were few among the Caseys able to resist the prowess of this right arm, puny as it was at the period in question. Our battles were obstinate and frequent; but as the quarrels of the two families and their relations on each side were as bitter and pugnacious in fairs and markets as ours were in school, we hit upon the plan of holding our Lilliputian engagements upon the same days on which our fathers and brothers contested. According to this plan, it very often happened that the corresponding parties were successful, and as frequently, that whilst the Caseys were well drubbed in the fair, their sons were victorious at school, and *vice versâ*.

For my part, I was early trained to cudgelling, and before I reached my fourteenth year, could pronounce as sage and accurate an opinion upon the merits of a *shillelagh*, as it is called, or cudgel, as a veterinary surgeon of sixty could upon a dead ass at first sight. Our plan of preparing is this:—we sallied out to any place where there was an underwood of blackthorn or oak, and, having surveyed the premises with the eye of a connoisseur, we selected the straightest root-growing piece which we could find: for if not root-growing, we did not consider it worth cutting, knowing from experience that a branch, how straight and fair soever it might look, would snap in the twist and tug of war. Having cut it as close to the root as possible, we then lopped off the branches, and put it up in the chimney to season. When seasoned, we took it down, and wrapping it in brown paper, well steeped in hog's lard or oil, we buried it in a horse-dunghill, paying it a daily visit for the purpose of making it straight by doubling back the bends or angles across the knee, in a direction contrary to their natural tendency. Having daily repeated this until we had made it straight, and renewed the oiled wrapping paper until the

staff was perfectly saturated, we then rubbed it well with a woollen cloth, containing a little black-lead and grease, to give it a polish. This was the last process, except that if we thought it too light at the top, we used to bore a hole in the lower end with a red-hot iron spindle, into which we poured melted lead, for the purpose of giving it the knock-down weight.

There were very few of Paddy Mulligan's scholars without a choice collection of them, and scarcely one who had not, before his fifteenth year, a just claim to be called the hero of a hundred fights, and the heritor of as many bumps on the cranium as would strike both Gall and Spurzheim speechless.

Now this, be it known, was, and in some districts yet is, an integral part of an Irish peasant's *education*. In the northern parts of Ireland, where the population of the Catholics on the one side, and of Protestants and Dissenters on the other, is nearly equal, I have known the respective scholars of Catholic and Protestant schools to challenge each other, and meet half-way to do battle, in vindication of their respective creeds; or for the purpose of establishing the character of their respective masters as the more learned man; for if we were to judge by the nature of the education then received, we would be led to conclude that a more commercial nation than Ireland was not on the face of the earth, it being the indispensable part of every scholar's business to become acquainted with the *three sets of Book-keeping*.

The boy who was the handiest and the most daring with the cudgel at Paddy Mulligan's school was Denis Kelly, the son of a wealthy farmer in the neighbourhood. He was a rash, hot-tempered, good-natured lad, possessing a more than common share of this blackthorn ambition; on which account he was cherished by his relations as a boy that was likely at a future period to be able to walk over the course of the parish, in fair, market, or patron. He certainly grew up a stout, able young fellow; and before he reached nineteen years, was unrivalled at the popular exercises of the peasantry. Shortly after that time he made his *début* in a party-quarrel, which took place in one of the Christmas *Margamores*,[1] and fully sustained the anticipations which were formed of him by his relations. For a year or two afterwards no quarrel was fought without him; and his prowess rose until he had gained the very pinnacle of that ambition which he had determined to reach. About this time I was separated from him, having found it necessary, in order to accomplish my objects in life, to reside with a relation in another part of the country.

The period of my absence, I believe, was about fourteen years, during which space I heard no account of him whatsoever. At length, however, that inextinguishable attachment which turns the affections and memory to the friends of our early days—to those scenes which we traversed when the heart was light and the spirits buoyant—determined me to make a visit to my native place, that I might witness the progress of time and care upon those faces that were once so

[1] Big Markets.

familiar to me ; that I might once more look upon the meadows and valleys, and groves, and mountains where I had so often played, and to which I still found myself bound by a tie that a more enlightened view of life and nature only made stronger and more enduring. I accordingly set off, and arrived, late in the evening of a December day, at a little town within a few miles of my native home. On alighting from the coach and dining, I determined to walk home, as it was a fine frosty night. The full moon hung in the blue unclouded firmament in all her lustre, and the stars shone out with that tremulous twinkling motion so peculiarly remarkable in frost. I had been absent, I said, about fourteen years, and felt that the enjoyment of this night would form an era in the records of my memory and my feelings. I find myself, indeed, utterly incapable of expressing what I experienced ; but those who have ever been in similar circumstances will understand what I mean. A strong spirit of practical poetry and romance was upon me : and I thought that a commonplace approach in the open day would have rendered my return to the scenes of my early life a very stale and unedifying matter.

I left the inn at seven o'clock, and as I had only five miles to walk, I would just arrive about nine, allowing myself to saunter on at the rate of two miles and a half per hour. My sensations, indeed, as I went along, were singular ; and as I took a solitary road across the mountains, the loneliness of the walk, the deep gloom of the valleys, the towering height of the dark hills, and the pale silvery light of a sleeping lake, shining dimly in the distance below, gave me such a distinct notion of the sublime and beautiful as I have seldom since experienced. I recommend every man who has been fourteen years absent from his native fields to return by moonlight.

Well, there is a mystery yet undiscovered in our being, for no man can know his feelings or his capacities. Many a slumbering thought, and sentiment, and association reposes within him, of which he is utterly ignorant, and which, except he come in contact with those objects whose influence over his mind can alone call them into being, may never be awakened, or give him one moment of either pleasure or pain. There is, therefore, a great deal in the position which we hold in society, and simply in situation. I felt this on *that* night : for the tenor of my reflections was new and original, and my feelings had a warmth and freshness in them which nothing but the situation in which I then found myself could give them. The force of association, too, was powerful ; for as I advanced nearer home, the names of hills, and lakes, and mountains, that I had utterly forgotten, as I thought, were distinctly revived in my memory ; and a crowd of youthful thoughts and feelings, that I imagined my intercourse with the world and the finger of time had blotted out of my being, began to crowd afresh on my fancy. The name of a townland would instantly return with its appearance ; and I could now remember the history of families and individuals that had long been effaced from my recollection.

But what is even more singular is that the superstitious terrors of my boyhood began to come over me, as formerly, whenever a spot

noted for supernatural appearances met my eye. It was in vain that I exerted myself to expel them, by throwing the barrier of philosophic reasoning in their way ; they still clung to me, in spite of every effort to the contrary. But the fact is that I was, for the moment, the slave of a morbid and feverish sentiment, that left me completely at the mercy of the dark and fleeting images that passed over my fancy. I now came to a turn where the road began to slope down into the depths of a valley that ran across it. When I looked forward into the bottom, all was darkness impenetrable, for the moonbeams were thrown off by the height of the mountains that rose on each side of it. I felt an indefinite sensation of fear, because at that moment I recollected that it had been, in my younger days, notorious as the scene of an apparition, where the spirit of a murdered pedlar had never been known to permit a solitary traveller to pass without appearing to him, and walking cheek-by-jowl along with him to the next house on the way, at which spot he usually vanished. The influence of my feelings, or, I should rather say, the physical excitement of my nerves, was by no means slight as these old traditions recurred to me ; although, at the same time, my moral courage was perfectly unimpaired, so that, notwithstanding this involuntary apprehension, I felt a degree of novelty and curiosity in descending the valley. "If it appear," said I, "I shall at least satisfy myself as to the truth of apparitions."

My dress consisted of a long, dark surtout, the collar of which, as the night was keen, I had turned up about my ears, and the corners of it met round my face. In addition to this I had a black silk handkerchief tied across my mouth, to keep out the night air, so that, as my dark fur travelling cap came down over my face, there was very little of my countenance visible. I now had advanced half-way into the valley, and all about me was dark and still : the moonlight was not nearer than the top of the hill which I was descending ; and I often turned round to look upon it, so silvery and beautiful it appeared at a distance. Sometimes I stood for a few moments admiring its effect, and contemplating the dark mountains as they stood out against the firmament, then kindled into magnificent grandeur by the myriads of stars that glowed in its expanse. There was perfect silence and solitude around me ; and as I stood alone in the dark chamber of the mountains, I felt the impressiveness of the situation gradually supersede my terrors. A sublime sense of religious awe descended on me ; my soul kindled into a glow of solemn and elevated devotion, which gave me a more intense perception of the presence of God than I had ever before experienced. "How sacred—how awful," thought I, "is this place !—how impressive is this hour !—surely, I feel myself at the footstool of God ! The voice of worship is in this deep, soul-thrilling silence, and the tongue of praise speaks, as it were, from the very solitude of the mountains !" I then thought of Him who went up into a mountain-top to pray, and felt the majesty of those admirable descriptions of the Almighty, given in the Old Testament, blend in delightful harmony with the beauty and fitness of the Christian dispensation, that brought life and immortality to light. "Here," said I,

"do I feel that I am indeed immortal, and destined for scenes of a more exalted and comprehensive existence!"

I then proceeded further into the valley, completely freed from the influence of old and superstitious associations. A few perches below me a small river crossed the road, over which was thrown a little stone bridge of rude workmanship. This bridge was the spot on which the apparition was said to appear; and as I approached it I felt the folly of those terrors which had only a few minutes before beset me so strongly. I found my moral energies recruited, and the dark phantasms of my imagination dispelled by the light of religion, which had refreshed me with a deep sense of the Almighty presence. I accordingly walked forward, scarcely bestowing a thought upon the history of the place, and had got within a few yards of the bridge, when, on resting my eye accidentally upon the little elevation formed by its rude arch, I perceived a black coffin placed at the edge of the road, exactly upon the bridge!

It may be evident to the reader that, however satisfactory the force of philosophical reasoning might have been upon the subject of the solitude, I was too much the creature of sensation for an hour before to look on such a startling object with firm nerves. For the first two or three minutes, therefore, I exhibited as finished a specimen of the dastardly as could be imagined. My hair absolutely raised my cap some inches off my head; my mouth opened to an extent which I did not conceive it could possibly reach; I thought my eyes shot out from their sockets; and my fingers spread out and became stiff, though powerless. The *obstupui* was perfectly realised in me, for, with the exception of a single groan which I gave on first seeing the object, I found that if one word would save my life, or transport me to my own fireside, I could not utter it. I was also rooted to the earth as if by magic; and although instant tergiversation and flight had my most hearty concurrence, I could not move a limb, nor even raise my eye off the sepulchral-looking object which lay before me. I now felt the perspiration fall from my face in torrents, and the strokes of my heart fell audibly on my ear. I even attempted to say "God preserve me," but my tongue was dumb and powerless, and could not move. My eye was still upon the coffin, when I perceived that, from being motionless, it instantly began to swing, first in a lateral, then in a longitudinal direction, although it was perfectly evident that no human hand was nearer it than my own. At length I raised my eyes off it, for my vision was strained to an aching intensity which I thought must have occasioned my eye-strings to crack. I looked instinctively about me for assistance—but all was dismal, silent, and solitary: even the moon had disappeared among a few clouds that I had not noticed in the sky.

As I stood in this state of indescribable horror I saw the light gradually fade away from the tops of the mountains, giving the scene around me a dim and spectral ghastliness, which, to those who were never in such a situation, is altogether inconceivable.

At length I thought I heard a noise as it were of a rushing tempest

sweeping from the hills down into the valley; but on looking up I could perceive nothing but the dusky desolation that brooded over the place. Still the noise continued: again I saw the coffin move; I then felt the motion communicated to myself, and found my body borne and swung backwards and forwards, precisely according to the motion of the coffin. I again attempted to utter a cry for assistance, but could not: the motion of my body still continued, as did the approaching noise in the hills. I looked up a second time in the direction in which the valley wound off between them, but judge of what I must have suffered when I beheld one of the mountains moving, as it were, from its base, and tumbling down towards the spot on which I stood. In the twinkling of an eye the whole scene, hills and all, began to tremble, to vibrate and to fly round me, with a rapid, delirious motion; the stars shot back into the depths of heaven, and disappeared; the ground on which I stood began to pass from beneath my feet; a noise like the breaking of a thousand gigantic billows again burst from every direction, and I found myself instantly overwhelmed by some deadly weight, which prostrated me on the earth, and deprived me of sense and motion.

I know not how long I continued in this state; but I remember that, on opening my eyes, the first object that presented itself to me was the sky, glowing as before with ten thousand stars, and the moon walking in her unclouded brightness through the heavens. The whole circumstance then rushed back upon my mind, but with a sense of horror very much diminished; I arose, and, on looking towards the spot, perceived the coffin in the same place. I then stood, and endeavouring to collect myself, viewed it as calmly as possible; it was, however as motionless and distinct as when I first saw it. I now began to reason upon the matter, and to consider that it was pusillanimous in me to give way to such boyish terrors. The confidence, also, which my heart, only a short time before this, had experienced in the presence and protection of the Almighty, again returned, and, along with it, a degree of religious fortitude which invigorated my whole system. "Well," thought I, "in the name of God, I shall ascertain what you are, let the consequence be what it may." I then advanced until I stood exactly over it, and raising my foot, gave it a slight kick. "Now," said I, "nothing remains but to ascertain whether it contains a dead body, or not," but, on raising the end of it, I perceived by its lightness that it was empty. To investigate the cause of its being left in this solitary spot was, however, not within the compass of my philosophy, so I gave that up. On looking at it more closely I noticed a plate marked with the name and age of the person for whom it was intended, and on bringing my eye near the letters, I was able between fingering and reading to make out the name of my old cudgel-fighting school-fellow, Denis Kelly.

This discovery threw a partial light upon the business; but I now remembered to have heard of individuals who had seen black, unearthly coffins, inscribed with the names of certain living persons; and that these were considered as ominous of the death of those

persons. I accordingly determined to be certain that this was a real coffin ; and as Denis's house was not more than a mile before me, I decided on carrying it that far. "If he be dead," thought I, "it will be all right, and if not, we will see more about it." My mind, in fact, was diseased with terror. I instantly raised the coffin, and as I found a rope lying on the ground under it, I strapped it about my shoulders and proceeded : nor could I help smiling when I reflected upon the singular transition which the man of sentiment and sensation so strangely underwent :—from the sublime contemplation of the silent mountain solitude and the spangled heavens to the task of carrying a coffin ! It was an adventure, however, and I was resolved to see how it would terminate.

There was from the bridge an ascent in the road, not so gradual as that by which I descended on the other side ; and as the coffin was rather heavy, I began to repent of having anything to do with it ; for I was by no means experienced in carrying coffins. The carriage of it was, indeed, altogether an irksome and unpleasant concern ; for owing to my ignorance of using the rope that tied it skilfully, it was every moment sliding down my back, dragging along the stones, or bumping against my heels : besides, I saw no sufficient grounds I had for entering upon the ludicrous and odd employment of carrying another man's coffin, and was several times upon the point of washing my hands out of it altogether. But the novelty of the incident, and the mystery in which it was involved, decided me in bringing it as far as Kelly's house, which was exactly on my way home.

I had yet half a mile to go ; but I thought it would be best to strap it more firmly about my body before I could start again : I therefore set it standing on its end, just at the turn of the road, until I should breathe a little, for I was rather exhausted by a trudge under it of half a mile and upwards. Whilst the coffin was in this position, I standing exactly behind it (Kelly had been a tall man, consequently it was somewhat higher than I was), a crowd of people bearing lights advanced round the corner ; and the first object which presented itself to their vision was the coffin in that position, whilst I was totally invisible behind it. As soon as they saw it there was an involuntary cry of consternation from the whole crowd ; at this time I had the coffin once more strapped firmly by a running knot to my shoulders, so that I could loose it whenever I pleased. On seeing the party, and hearing certain expressions which dropped from them, I knew at once that there had been some unlucky blunder in the business on their part ; and I would have given a good deal to be out of the circumstances in which I then stood. I felt that I could not possibly have accounted for my situation, without bringing myself in for as respectable a portion of rank cowardice as those who ran away from the coffin ; for that it was left behind in a fit of terror I now entertained no doubt whatever, particularly when I remembered the traditions connected with the spot in which I found it.

"*Manim a Yea agus a wurrah !*"[1] exclaimed one of them, "if the

[1] My soul to God and the Virgin.

black man hasn't brought it up from the bridge : *dher a lorna heena*,[1] he did ; for it was above the bridge we first seen him : jist for all the world—the Lord be about us—as Antony and me war coming out on the road at the bridge, there he was standing—a headless man, all black, widout face or eyes upon him—and then we cut acrass the fields home."

"But where is he now, Eman?" said one of them ; "are you sure you seen him?"

"Seen him!'" both exclaimed ; "do ye think we'd take to our scrapers like two hares, only we did ; arrah, bad manners to you, do you think the coffin could walk up wid itself from the bridge to this, only he brought it?—isn't that enough?"

"Thrue for yees," the rest exclaimed, "but what's to be done?"

"Why to bring the coffin home, now that we're all together," another observed ; "they say he never appears to more than two at wanst, so he won't be apt to show himself now."

"Well, boys, let two of you go down to it," said one of them, "and we'll wait here till yees bring it up."

"Yes," said Eman Dhu, "do you go down, Owen, as you have the scapular on you, and the jug of holy water in your hand, and let Billy M'Shane, here, repate the *confeethur* along wid you."

"Isn't it the same thing, Eman," replied Owen, "if I shake the holy water on you and whoever goes wid you ; sure you know that if only one dhrop of it touched you, the devil himself couldn't harm you!"

"And what needs yourself be afraid, then?" retorted Eman ; "and you has the scapular on you to the back of that? Didn't you say, as you war coming out, that if it *was* the devil, you'd disparse him?"

"You had betther not be mintioning his name, you *omadhaun*," replied the other ; "if I was your age, and hadn't a wife and childre on my hands, it's myself that would trusc in God, and go down manfully ; but the people are hen-hearted now, besides what they used to be in my time."

During this conversation I had resolved, if possible, to keep up the delusion, until I could get myself extricated with due secrecy out of this ridiculous situation ; and I was glad to find that, owing to their cowardice, there was some likelihood of effecting my design.

"Ned," said one of them to a little man, "go down and speak to it, as it can't harm *you*."

"Why, sure," said Ned, with a tremor in his voice, "I can speak to it where I am, widout going within rache of it. Boys, stay close to me : hem—In the name of—but don't you think I had betther spake to it in the Latin I sarve mass wid ; it can't but answer that, for the *sòwl* of it, seeing it's a blest language?"

"Very well," the rest replied ; "try that, Ned ; give it the best and ginteelest grammar you have, and maybe it may thrate us dacent."

Now it so happened that, in my schoolboy days, I had joined, from mere frolic, a class of young fellows who were learning what is

[1] By the *very* book.

called the "*Sarvin' of Mass*," and had impressed it so accurately on a pretty retentive memory that I never forgot it. At length, Ned pulled out his beads, and bedewed himself most copiously with the holy water. He then shouted out, with a voice which resembled that of a man in an ague fit—"*Dom-i-n-us vo-bis-cum?*" "*Et cum spiritu tuo*," I replied, in a husky sepulchral tone, from behind the coffin. As soon as I uttered these words the whole crowd ran back instinctively with affright; and Ned got so weak that they were obliged to support him.

"Lord have marcy on us," said Ned: "boys, isn't it an awful thing to speak to a spirit? My hair is like I dunna what, it's sticking up so stiff upon my head."

"Spake to it in English, Ned," said they, "till we hear what it will say. Ax it does anything trouble it; or whether it's *sowl's* in Purgatory."

"Wouldn't it be betther," observed another, "to ax it who murdhered it—maybe it wants to discover that?"

"In the—na-me of go-o-d-ness," said Ned, down to me, "what are you?"

"I'm the soul," I replied in the same voice, "of the pedlar that was murdered on the bridge below."

"And—who—was—it, sur, wid—submission, that—murdhered—you?"

To this I made no reply.

"I say," continued Ned, "in—the—name—of—g-o-o-d-ness—who was it—that took the liberty of murdhering you, dacent man?"

"Ned Corrigan," I answered, giving his own name.

"Hem! God presarve us! Ned Corrigan!" he exclaimed. "What Ned, for there's two of them.—Is it myself, or the *other* vagabone?"

"Yourself, you murderer!" I replied.

"Ho!" said Ned, getting quite stout—"Is that you, neighbour? Come, now, walk out wid yourself out of that coffin, you vagabone you, whoever you are."

"What do you mane, Ned, by spaking to it that-a-away?" the rest inquired.

"Hut," said Ned, "it's some fellow or other that's playing a thrick upon us. Sure I never knew neither act nor part of the murdher, nor of the murdherers; and you know, if it was anything of that nature, it couldn't tell me a lie, and me a scapularian, along wid axing it in God's name, wid Father Feasthalagh's Latin."

"Big tare-an'-ouns!" said the rest, "if we thought it was any man making fun of us, but we'd crop the ears off his head, to tache him to be joking!"

To tell the truth, when I heard this suggestion, I began to repent of my frolic; but I was determined to make another effort to finish the adventure creditably.

"Ned," said they, "throw some of the holy water on us all, and in the name of St. Pether and the Blessed Virgin, we'll go down and examine it in a body."

This they considered a good thought, and Ned was sprinkling the water about him in all directions, whilst he repeated some jargon which was completely unintelligible. They then began to approach the coffin at dead-march time, and I felt that this was the only moment in which my plan could succeed—for had I waited until they came down, all would have been discovered. As soon, therefore, as they began to move towards me, I also began, with equal solemnity, to retrograde towards *them;* so that, as the coffin was between us, it seemed to move without human means.

"Stop, for God's sake, stop," shouted Ned; "it's movin'! It has made the coffin alive; don't you see it stepping this way widout hand or foot, barring the boords!"

There was now a halt to ascertain the fact: but I still retrograded. This was sufficient—a cry of terror broke from the whole group, and, without waiting for further evidence, they set off in the direction they came from, at full speed, Ned flinging the jug of holy water at the coffin, lest the latter should follow, or the former encumber him in his flight. Never was there so complete a discomfiture; and so eager were they to escape that several of them came down on the stones; and I could hear them shouting with desperation, and imploring the more advanced not to leave them behind. I instantly disentangled myself from the coffin, and left it standing exactly in the middle of the road, for the next passenger to give it a lift as far as Denis Kelly's, if he felt so disposed. I lost no time in making the best of my way home; and on passing poor Denis's house, I perceived, by the bustle and noise within, that he was dead.

I had given my friends no notice of this visit; my reception was consequently the warmer, as I was not expected. That evening was a happy one, which I shall long remember. At supper I alluded to Kelly, and received from my brother a full account, as given in the following narrative, of the circumstances which caused his death.

"I need not remind you, Toby, of our schoolboy days, nor of the principles usually imbibed at such schools as that in which the two tiny factions of the Caseys and the Murphys qualified themselves—among the latter of whom you cut so distinguished a figure. You will not, therefore, be surprised to hear that those two factions are as bitter as ever; and that the boys who at Pat Mulligan's school belaboured each other, in imitation of their brothers and fathers, continue to set the same iniquitous example to their children; so that this groundless and hereditary enmity is likely to descend to future generations—unless, indeed, the influence of a more enlightened system of education may check it. But, unhappily, there is a strong suspicion of the object proposed by such a system; so that the advantages likely to result from it to the lower orders of the people will be slow and distant."

"But, John," said I, "now that we are upon that subject, let me ask what really *is* the bone of contention between Irish factions?"

"I assure you," he replied, "I am almost as much at a loss, Toby, to give you a satisfactory answer, as if you asked me the elevation of the

highest mountain on the moon ; and I believe you would find equal difficulty in ascertaining the cause of the feuds from the factions themselves. I really am convinced they know not, nor, if I rightly understand them, do they much care. Their object is to fight, and the turning of a straw will at any time furnish them with sufficient grounds for that. I do not think, after all, that the enmity between them is purely personal : they do not hate each other individually ; but having originally had one quarrel upon some trifling occasion, the beaten party could not bear the stigma of defeat without another trial of strength. Then if they succeed, the *onus* of retrieving lost credit is thrown upon the party that was formerly victorious. If they fail a second time, the double triumph of their conquerors excites them to a greater determination to throw off the additional disgrace ; and this species of alternation perpetuates the evil.

"These habits, however, familiarise our peasantry to acts of outrage and violence—the bad passions are cultivated and nourished, until crimes, which peaceable men look upon with fear and horror, lose their real magnitude and deformity in the eyes of Irishmen. I believe this kind of undefined hatred between either parties or nations is the most dangerous and fatal spirit which could pervade any portion of society. If you hate a man for an obvious and palpable injury, it is likely that when he cancels that injury by an act of subsequent kindness, accompanied by an exhibition of sincere sorrow, you will cease to look upon him as your enemy ; but where the hatred is such that, while feeling it, you cannot, on a sober examination of your heart, account for it, there is little hope that you will ever be able to stifle the enmity which you entertain against him. This, however, in politics and religion, is what is frequently designated as principle—a word on which men possessing higher and greater advantages than the poor ignorant peasantry of Ireland pride themselves. In sects and parties we may mark its effects among all ranks and nations. I, therefore, seldom wish, Toby, to hear a man assert that he is of this party or that from *principle ;* for I am usually inclined to suspect that he is not, in this case, influenced by *conviction.*

"Kelly was a man who, but for these scandalous proceedings among us, might have been now alive and happy. Although his temperament was warm, yet that warmth communicated itself to his good as well as to his evil qualities. In the beginning his family were not attached to any faction—and when I use the word *faction*, it is in contradistinction to the word *party*—for faction, you know, is applied to a feud or grudge between Roman Catholics exclusively. But when he was young he ardently attached himself to the Murphys ; and, having continued among them until manhood, he could not abandon them consistently with that sense of mistaken honour which forms so prominent a feature in the character of Irish peasantry. But although the Kellys were not *faction men*, they were bitter *party men*, being the ringleaders of every quarrel which took place between the Catholics and Protestants, or, I should rather say, between the Orangemen and Whiteboys.

"From the moment when Denis attached himself to the Murphys until the day he received the beating which subsequently occasioned his death, he never withdrew from them. He was in all their battles; and in course of time induced his relations to follow his example; so that, by general consent, they were nicknamed 'the Errigle Slashers.' Soon after you left the country, and went to reside with my uncle, Denis married a daughter of little Dick Magrath's, from the Race-road, with whom he got alittle money. She proved a kind, affectionate wife; and to do him justice, I believe he was an excellent husband. Shortly after his marriage his father died, and Denis succeeded him in his farm; for you know that among the peasantry the youngest usually gets the landed property—the elder children being obliged to provide for themselves according to their ability, or otherwise a population would multiply upon a portion of land inadequate to their support.

"It was supposed that Kelly's marriage would have been the means of producing a change in him for the better, but it did not. He was, in fact, the slave of a low, vain ambition, which constantly occasioned him to have some quarrel or other on his hands; and as he possessed great physical courage and strength, he became the champion of the parish. It was in vain that his wife used every argument to induce him to relinquish such practices; the only reply he was in the habit of making was a good-humoured slap on the back and a laugh, saying:

"'That's it, Honor; sure and isn't that the Magraths all over, that would let the manest spalpeen that ever chewed cheese thramp upon them widout raising a hand in their own defence; and I don't blame you for being a coward, seeing that you have their blood in your veins—not but that there ought to be something betther in you, afther all; for it's the M'Karrons, by your mother's side, that had the good dhrop of their own in them, anyhow—but you're a Magrath, out and out.'

"'And, Denis,' Honor would reply, 'it would be a blessed day for the parish if all in it were as peaceable as the same Magraths. There would be no sore heads, nor broken bones, nor fighting, nor slashing of one another in fairs and markets, when people ought to be minding their business. You're ever and always at the Magraths, bekase they don't join you agin the Caseys or the Orangemen, and more fools they'd be to make or meddle between you, having no spite agin either of them; and it would be wiser for you to be *sed* by the Magraths, and *red* your hands out of sich ways altogether. What did ever the Murphys do to sarve you or any of your family, that you'd go to make a great man of yourself fighting for them? Or what did the poor Caseys do to make you go agin the honest people? Arrah, bad manners to me, if you know what you're about, or if *sonse* [1] or grace can ever come of it; and mind my words, Denis, if God hasn't sed it, you'll live to rue your folly for the same work.'

"At this Denis would laugh heartily. 'Well said, Honor *Magrath*, but not *Kelly*. Well, it's one comfort that our childher aren't likely to follow your side of the house, anyway. Come here, Lanty—come

[1] Good luck.

over, acushla, to your father! Lanty, ma bouchal, what'ill you do when you grow a man?'

"'I'll buy a horse of my own to ride on, daddy.'

"'A horse, Lanty!—and so you will, ma bouchal; but that's not it—sure that's not what I mane, Lanty. What'ill you do to the Caseys?'

"'Ho, ho! the Caseys!—I'll bate the blackguards wid your blackthorn, daddy!'

"'Ha, ha, ha!—that's my stout man—my brave little sodger! *Wus dha lamh, avick!*—give me your hand, my son! Here, Nelly,' he would say to the child's eldest sister, 'give him a brave whang of bread, to make him able to bate the Caseys. Well, Lanty, who more will you leather, ahagur?'

"'All the Orangemen—I'll kill all the Orangemen!'

"This would produce another laugh from the father, who would again kiss and shake hands with his son for these early manifestations of his own spirit.

"'Lanty, ma bouchal,' he would say, 'thank God, you're not a *Magrath;* 'tis you that's a *Kelly*, every blessed inch of you!—and if you turn out as good a *buillagh batthah* as your father afore you, I'll be contint, avourneen!'

"'God forgive you, Denis,' the wife would reply, 'it's long before you'd think of larning him his prayers, or his catechism, or anything that's good! Lanty, agra, come over to myself, and never heed what that man says; for, except you have some poor body's blessing, he'll bring you to no good.'

"Sometimes, however, Kelly's own natural good sense, joined with the remonstrances of his wife, prevailed for a short time, and he would withdraw himself from the connection altogether; but the force of habit and of circumstances was too strong in him to hope that he could ever overcome it by his own firmness, for he was totally destitute of religion. The peaceable intervals of his life were, therefore, very short.

"One summer evening I was standing in my own garden, when I saw a man galloping up towards me at full speed. When he approached, I recognised him as one of the Murphy faction, and perceived that he was cut and bleeding.

"'Murphy,' said I, 'what's the matter?'

"'Hard fighting, sir,' said he, 'is the matter. The Caseys gathered all their faction, bekase they heard that Denis Kelly has given us up, and they're sweeping the street wid us. I'm going hot foot for Kelly, sir, for even the very name of him will turn the tide in our favour. Along wid that, I have sint in a score of the Duggans, and, if I get in Denis, plase God we'll clear the town of them!'

"He then set off, but pulled up abruptly, and said:

"'Arrah, Mr. Darcy, maybe you'd be civil enough to lind me the loan of a sword, or bagnet, or gun, or anything that way, that would be sarviceable to a body on a pinch?'

"'Yes!' said I, 'and enable you to commit murder. No, no,

Murphy: I'm sorry it's not in my power to put a final stop to such dangerous quarrels!'

"He then dashed off, and in the course of a short time I saw him and Kelly, both on horseback, hurrying into the town in all possible haste, armed with their cudgels. The following day I got my dog and gun, and sauntered about the hills, making a point to call upon Kelly. I found him with his head tied up, and his arm in a sling.

"'Well, Denis,' said I, 'I find you have kept your promise of giving up quarrels!'

"'And so I did, sir,' said Denis; 'but sure you wouldn't have me go for to desart them, when the Caseys war three to one over them. No: God be thanked, I'm not so mane as that, anyhow. Besides, they welted both my brothers within an inch of their lives.'

"'I think they didn't miss yourself,' said I.

"'You may well say they did not, sir,' he replied; 'and, to tell God's thruth, they thrashed us right and left out of the town, although we rallied three times, and came in again. At any rate, it's the first time, for the last five years, that they dare go up and down the street calling out for the face of a Murphy or a Kelly—for they're as bitter now agin us as agin the Murphys themselves.'

"'Well, I hope, Denis,' I observed, 'that what occurred yesterday will prevent you from entering into their quarrels in future. Indeed, I shall not give over until I prevail on you to lead a quiet and peaceable life, as the father of a rising family ought to do.'

"'Denis,' said the wife, when I alluded to the children, looking at him with a reproachful and significant expression—'Denis, do you hear *that?*—the *father* of a family, Denis! Oh, then, God look down on that family, but it's—Musha, God bless you and yours, sir,' said she to me, dropping that part of the subject abruptly.—'It's kind of you to trouble yourself about him, at all at all; it's what them that has a betther right to do it doesn't do.'

"'I hope,' said I, 'that Denis's own good sense will show him the folly and guilt of his conduct, and that he will not, under any circumstances, enter into their battles in future. Come, Denis, will you promise me this?'

"'If any man,' replied Denis, 'could make me do it, it's yourself, sir, or any one of your family; but, if the priest of the parish was to go down on his two knees before me, I wouldn't give it up till we give them vagabone Caseys one glorious battherin', which, plase God, we'll do, and are well able to do, before a month of Sundays goes over us. Now, sir, you needn't say another word,' said he, seeing me about to speak, 'for, by Him that made me, we'll do it. If any man, I say, could persuade me agin it, you could; but, if we don't pay them full interest for what we got, why, my name's not Denis Kelly—ay, sweep them like varmint out of the town, body and sleeves!'

"I saw argument would be lost on him, so I only observed that I feared it would eventually end badly.

"'Och, many and many's the time, Mr. Darcy,' said Honor, 'I prophesied the same thing; and if God hasn't said it, he'll be coming

home a corpse to me some day or other, for he got as much bating, sir, as would be enough to kill a horse; and to tell you God's truth, sir, he's breeding up his childher ——'

"'Honor,' said Kelly, irritated—'whatever I do, do I lave it in your power to say that I'm a bad husband? so don't *rise* me by your talk, for I don't like to be provoked. I *know* it's wrong, but what can I do? Would you have me for to show the *Garran bane*,[1] and lave them like a cowardly thraitor, now that the other faction is coming up to be their match? No; let what will come of it, I'll never do the mane thing—death before dishonour!'

"In this manner Kelly went on for years; sometimes, indeed, keeping quiet for a short period, but eventually drawn in, from the apprehension of being reproached with want of honour and truth to his connection. This, truly, is an imputation which no peasant could endure; nor, were he thought capable of treachery, would his life be worth a single week's purchase. Many a time have I seen Kelly reeling home, his head and face sadly cut, the blood streaming from him, and his wife and some neighbour on each side of him—the poor woman weeping and deploring the senseless and sanguinary feuds in which her husband took so active a part.

"About three miles from this, down at the Long Ridge, where the Shannons live, dwelt a family of the M'Guigans, cousins to Denis. They were anything but industrious, although they might have lived very independently, having held a farm on what they call an *old take*, which means a long lease taken out when the lands were cheap. It so happened, however, that, like too many of their countrymen, they paid little attention to the cultivation of their farm, the consequence of which neglect was that they became embarrassed and overburdened with arrears. Their landlord was old Sam Simmonds, whose only fault to his tenants was an excess of indulgence, and a generous disposition, wherever he could possibly get an opportunity, to scatter his money about him, upon the spur of a benevolence which it would seem never ceased goading him to acts of the most Christian liberality and kindness. Along with these excellent qualities, he was remarkable for a most rooted aversion to law and lawyers; for he would lose one hundred pounds rather than recover that sum by legal proceedings, even when certain that five pounds would effect it; but he seldom or never was known to pardon a breach of the peace.

"I have always found that an *excess* of indulgence in a landlord never fails ultimately to injure and relax the industry of the tenant; at least, this was the effect which *his* forbearance produced on them. But the most extraordinary good nature has its limits, and so had his; after repeated warning, and the most unparalleled patience on his part, he was at length compelled to determine on at once removing them from his estate, and letting his land to some more efficient and deserving tenant. He accordingly desired them to remove their property from the premises, as he did not wish, he said, to leave them

[1] The white horse, *i. e.*, be wanting in mettle.

without the means of entering upon another farm, if they felt so disposed. This they refused to do, adding that they would at least put him to the expense of ejecting them. He then gave orders to his agent to seize; but they, in the meantime, had secreted their effects by night among their friends and relations, sending a cow to this one, and a horse to that; so that when the bailiff came to levy his execution, he found very little except the empty walls. They were, however, ejected without ceremony, and driven altogether off the farm, for which they had actually paid nothing for the three preceding years. In the meantime the farm was advertised to be let, and several persons had offered themselves as tenants; but what appeared very remarkable was that the Roman Catholics seldom came a second time to make any further inquiry about it; or if they did, Simmons observed that they were sure to withdraw their proposals, and ultimately decline having anything to do with it.

"This was a circumstance which he could not properly understand; but the fact was that the peasantry were, to a man, members of a widely-extending system of Whiteboyism, the secret influence of which intimidated such of their own religion as intended to take it, and prevented them from exposing themselves to the penalty which they knew those who should dare to occupy it must pay. In a short time, however, the matter began to be whispered about, until it spread gradually, day after day, through the parish, that those who already had proposed, or intended to propose, were afraid to enter upon the land on any terms. Hitherto, it is true, these threats floated about only in the invisible form of rumour.

"The farm had been now unoccupied for about a year: party spirit ran very high among the peasantry, and no proposals came in, or were at all likely to come. Simmons then got advertisements printed, and had them posted up in the most conspicuous parts of this and the neighbouring parishes. It was expected, however, that they would be torn down; but instead of that, there was a written notice posted up immediately under each, which ran in the following words:—

"'TAKE NOTESS.

"'*Any man that'll dare to take the farm belonging to yallow Saw Simmons, and sitivated at the long ridge, will be flayed alive.*

"'MAT MIDNIGHT.

"'B. N.—*It's it that was latterrally occupied by the M'Guigans.*'

"This occasioned Simmons and the other magistrates of the barony to hold a meeting, at which they subscribed to the amount of fifty pounds as a reward for discovering the author or authors of the threatening notice; but the advertisement containing the reward, which was posted in the usual places through the parish, was torn down on the first night after it was put up. In the meantime, a man nicknamed Vengeance—Vesey Vengeance, in consequence of his daring and fearless spirit, and his bitterness in retaliating injury—

came to Simmons, and proposed for the farm. The latter candidly mentioned the circumstances of the notice, and fairly told him that he was running a personal risk in taking it.

"'Leave that to me, sir,' said Vengeance; 'if you will set me the farm at the terms I offer, I am willing to become your tenant; and let them that posted up the notices go to old Nick, or if they annoy me, let them take care I don't send them there. I am a true-blue, sir—a purple man—have lots of firearms, and plenty of stout fellows in the parish ready and willing to back me; and, by the light of day! if they make or meddle with me or mine, we will hunt them in the face of the world, like so many mad dogs, out of the country: what are they but a pack of *ribils*,[1] that would cut our throats if they dared?'

"'I have no objection,' said Simmons, 'that you should express a firm determination to defend your life and protect your property; but I utterly condemn the spirit with which you seem to be animated. Be temperate and sober, but be firm. I will afford you every assistance and protection in my power, both as a magistrate and a landlord; but if you speak so incautiously, the result may be serious, if not fatal, to yourself.'

"'Instead of that,' said Vengeance, 'the more a man appears to be afeard, the more danger he is in, as I know by what I have seen; but, at any rate, if they injure me, I wouldn't ask better sport than taking down the ribils—the bloody-minded villians! Isn't it a purty thing that a man darn't put one foot past the other, only as *they* wish? By the light of day, I'll pepper them!'

"Shortly after this, Vengeance, braving all their threats, removed to the farm, and set about its cultivation with skill and vigour. He had not been long there, however, when a notice was posted one night on his door, giving him ten days to clear off from this interdicted spot, threatening, in case of non-compliance, to make a bonfire of the house and offices, inmates included. The reply which Vengeance made to this was fearless and characteristic. He wrote another notice, which he posted on the chapel door, stating that he would not budge an inch—recommending, at the same time, such as intended paying him a nightly visit to be careful that they might not chance to go home with their heels foremost. This, indeed, was setting them completely at defiance, and would, no doubt, have been fatal to Vesey, were it not for a circumstance which I will now relate. In a little dell below Vesey's house lived a poor woman called Doran, a widow; she inhabited a small hut, and was principally supported by her two sons, who were servants—one to a neighbouring farmer, a Roman Catholic, and the other to Dr. Ableson, rector of the parish. He who had been with the rector lost his health shortly before Vengeance succeeded the M'Guigans as occupier of the land in question, and was obliged to come home to his mother. He was then confined to his bed, from which, indeed, he never rose.

"This boy had been his mother's principal support—for the other

[1] Rebels.

was unsettled, and paid her but little attention, being, like most of those in his situation, fond of drinking, dancing, and attending fairs. In short, he became a Ribbonman, and consequently was obliged to attend their nightly meetings. Now it so happened that for a considerable time after the threatening notice had been posted on Vengeance's door, he received no annoyance, although the period allowed for his departure had been long past, and the purport of the paper uncomplied with. Whether this proceeded from an apprehension on the part of the Ribbonmen of receiving a warmer welcome than they might wish, or whether they deferred the execution of their threat until Vengeance might be off his guard, I cannot determine ; but the fact is that some months had elapsed and Vengeance remained hitherto unmolested.

"During this interval the distress of Widow Doran had become known to the inmates of his family, and his mother—for she lived with him—used to bring down each day some nourishing food to the sick boy. In these kind offices she was very punctual ; and so great was the poverty of the poor widow, and so destitute the situation of her sick son, that, in fact, the burden of their support lay principally upon Vengeance's family.

"Vengeance was a small, thin man, with fair hair and fiery eyes ; his voice was loud and shrill, his utterance rapid, and the general expression of his countenance irritable. His motions were so quick that he rather seemed to run than walk. He was a civil, obliging neighbour, but performed his best actions with a bad grace ; a firm, unflinching friend, but a bitter and implacable enemy. Upon the whole, he was generally esteemed and respected—though considered as an eccentric character, for such, indeed, he was. On hearing of Widow Doran's distress, he gave orders that a portion of each meal should be regularly sent down to her and her son ; and from that period forward they were both supported principally from his table.

"In this way some months had passed, and still Vengeance was undisturbed in his farm. It often happened, however, that Doran's other son came to see his brother ; and during these visits it was but natural that his mother and brother should allude to the kindness which they daily experienced from Vesey.

"One night, about twelve o'clock, a tap came to Widow Doran's door, who happened to be attending the invalid, as he was then nearly in the last stage of his illness. When she opened it, the other son entered, in an evident hurry, having the appearance of a man who felt deep and serious anxiety.

"'Mother,' said he, 'I was very uneasy entirely about Mick, and just started over to see him, although they don't know at home that I'm out, so I can't stay a crack ; but I wish you would go to the door for two or three minutes, as I have something to say to *him*.'

"'Why, thin, Holy Mother !—Jack, ahagur, is there anything the matther, for you look as if you had seen something ?'

"'Nothing worse than myself, mother,' he replied ; 'nor there's nothing the matther at all—only I have a few words to say to Mick here, that's all.'

"The mother accordingly removed herself out of hearing.

"'Mick,' says the boy, 'this is a bad business—I wish to God I was clear and clane out of it.'

"'What is it?' said Mick, alarmed.

"'Murther, I'm afeard, if God doesn't turn it off them somehow.'

"'What do you mane, man, at all?' said the invalid, raising himself, in deep emotion, on his elbow, from his poor straw bed.

"'Vengeance,' said he—'Vengeance, man—he's going to get it. I was out with the boys on Sunday evening, and *at last* it's agreed on to visit him to-morrow night. I'm sure and sartin he'll never escape, for there's more *in* for him than taking the farm, and daring them so often as he did—he shot two fingers off of a brother-in-law of Jem Reilly's one night that they war *on* for threshing him, and that's coming home to him along with the rest.'

"'In the name of God, Jack,' inquired Mick, 'what do you intend to do with him?'

"'Why,' replied Jack, 'it's agreed to put a coal in the thatch, in the first place; and although they were afeard to name what he's to get besides, I doubt they'll make a spatch-cock of *himself*. They won't meddle with any other of the family, though—but *he's down* for it.'

"'Are *you* to be one of them?' asked Mick.

"'I was the third man named,' replied the other, 'bekase, they said, I knew the place.'

"'Jack,' said his emaciated brother, with much solemnity, raising himself up in the bed—'Jack, if you have act or part in that bloody business, God in his glory you'll never see. Fly the country—cut off a finger or toe—break your arm—or do something that may prevent you from being there. Oh, my God!' he exclaimed, whilst the tears fell fast down his pale cheeks—'to go to murder the man, and lave his little family widout a head or a father over them, and his wife a widow! To burn his place, widout rhyme, or rason, or offince. Jack, if you go, I'll die cursing you. I'll appear to you—I'll let you rest neither night nor day, sleeping nor waking, in bed or out of bed. I'll haunt you till you'll curse the very day you war born.'

"'Whisht, Micky,' said Jack, 'you're frightening me: I'll not go—will that satisfy you?'

"'Well, dhrop down on your two knees, there,' said Micky, 'and swear, before the God that has His eye upon you this minute, that you'll have no hand in injuring him or his while you live. If you don't do this, I'll not rest in my grave, and maybe I'll be a corpse before mornin'.'

"'Well, Micky,' said Jack, who, though wild and unthinking, was a lad whose heart and affections were good, 'it would be hard for me to refuse you that much, and you not likely to be long with me—I will,' and he accordingly knelt down and swore solemnly, in words which his brother dictated to him, that he would not be concerned in the intended murder.

"'Now give me your hand, Jack,' said the invalid; 'God bless you

—and so he will. Jack, if I depart before I see you again, I'll die happy. That man has supported me and my mother for near the last three months, bad as you all think him. Why, Jack, we would both be dead of hunger long ago, only for his family: and, my God! to think of such a murdhering intention makes my blood run cowld——'

"'You had better give him a hint, then,' said Jack, 'some way, or he'll be done for, as sure as you're stretched on that bed; but don't mintion names, if you wish to keep me from being murdhered for what I did. I must be off now, for I stole out of the barn;[1] and only that Atty Laghy's gone along wid the master to the——fair, to help him sell the two coults, I couldn't get over at all.'

"'Well, go home, Jack, and God bless you, and so he will, for what you did this night.'

"Jack accordingly departed, after bidding his mother and brother farewell.

"When the old woman came in, she asked her son if there was anything wrong with his brother, but he replied that there was not.

"'Nothing at all,' said he; 'but will you go up airly in the morning, plase God, and tell Vesey Johnston that I want to see him; and—that—I have a great dale to say to him.'

"'To be sure I will, Micky; but, Lord guard us, what ails you, avourneen, you look so frightened?'

"'Nothing at all at all, mother; but will you go where I say airly to-morrow, for me?'

"'It's the first thing I'll do, God willin',' replied the mother. And the next morning Vesey was down with the invalid very early, for the old woman kept her word, and paid him a timely visit.

"'Well, Micky, my boy,' said Vengeance, as he entered the hut, 'I hope you're no worse this morning.'

"'Not worse, sir,' replied Mick; 'nor, indeed, am I anything better either, but much the same way. Sure it's I that knows very well that my time here is but short.'

"'Well, Mick, my boy,' said Vengeance, 'I hope you're prepared for death—and that you expect forgiveness, like a Christian. Look up, my boy, to God at once, and pitch the priests and their craft to ould Nick, where they'll all go at the long run.'

"'I blieve,' said Mick, with a faint smile, 'that you're not very fond of the priests, Mr. Johnston; but if you knew the power they possess as well as I do, you wouldn't spake of them so bad, anyhow.'

"'Me fond of them!' replied the other; 'why, man, they're a set of the most gluttonous, black-looking hypocrites that ever walked on neat's leather: and ought to be hunted out of the country—hunted out of the country, by the light of day! every one of them; for they do nothing but egg up the people against the Protestants.'

"'God help you, Mr. Johnston,' replied the invalid; 'I pity you from my heart for the opinion you hould about the blessed crathurs. I suppose if you were sthruck dead on the spot wid a blast from the

[1] Labouring servants in Ireland usually sleep in barns.

fairies, that you think a priest couldn't cure you by one word's spaking?'

"'Cure me!' said Vengeance, with a laugh of disdain; 'by the light of day, if I caught one of them curing me, I'd give him the purtiest chase you ever saw in your life across the hills.'

"'Don't you know,' said Mick, 'that priest Dannelly cured Bob Arthurs of the falling sickness, until he broke the vow that was laid upon him of not going into a church; and the minute he crossed the church-door didn't he dhrop down as bad as ever—and what could the minister do for him?'

"'And don't *you* know,' rejoined Vengeance, 'that that's all a parcel of the most lying stuff possible; lies—lies—all lies—and vagabondism. Why, Mick, you Papishes worship the priests; you think they can bring you to heaven at a word. By the light of day, they must have good sport laughing at you when they get among one another. Why don't they teach you, and give you the Bible to read, the ribelly rascals? but they're afraid you'd know too much then.'

"'Well, Mr. Johnston,' said Mick, 'I blieve you'll never have a good opinion of them, at any rate.'

"'Ay, when the sky falls,' replied Vengeance; 'but you're now on your death-bed, and why don't you pitch them to ould Nick, and get a Bible? Get a Bible, man; there's a pair of them in my house that's never used at all—except my mother's, and she's at it night and day. I'll send one of them down to you: turn yourself to God—to your Redeemer, that died on the mount of Jehoshaphat, or somewhere about Jerusalem, for your sins—and don't go out of the world from the hand of a rascally priest, with a band about your eyes, as if you were at blind-man's-buff; for, by the light of day, you're as blind as a bat in a religious way.'

"'There's no use in sending me a Bible,' replied the invalid, 'for I can't read it: but, whatever you may think, I'm very willing to lave my salvation with my priest.'

"'Why, man,' observed Vengeance, 'I thought you were going to have sense at last, and that you sent for me to give you some spiritual consolation.'

"'No, sir,' replied Mick; 'I have two or three words to spake to you.'

"'Come, come, Mick, now that we're on a spiritual subject, I'll hear nothing from you till I try whether it's possible to give you a true insight into religion. Stop, now, and let us lay our heads together, that we may make out something of a dacenter creed for you to believe in than the one you profess. Tell me truth, do you believe in the priests?'

"'How?' replied Mick. 'I believe that they're holy men—but I know they can't save me widout the Redeemer and His blessed mother.'

"'By the light above us, you're shuffling, Mick; I say you *do* believe in them—now don't tell me to the contrary—I say you're shuffling as fast as possible.'

"'I tould you truth, sir,' replied Mick; 'and if you don't blieve me, I can't help it.'

"'Don't trust in the priests, Mick; that's the main point to secure your salvation.'

"Mick, who knew his prejudices against the priests, smiled faintly, and replied:

"'Why, sir, I trust in them as being able to make inthercession wid God for me, that's all.'

"'They make intercession! By the stool I'm sitting on, a single word from one of them would ruin you. They, a set of ribles, to make interest for you in heaven! Didn't they rise the rebellion in Ireland? answer me that.'

"'This is a subject, sir, we would never agree on,' replied Mick.

"'Have you the Ten Commandments?' inquired Vesey.

"'I doubt my mimory's not clear enough to have them in my mind,' said the lad, feeling keenly the imputation of ignorance which he apprehended from Vesey's blunt observations.

"Vesey, however, had penetration enough to perceive his feelings, and with more delicacy than could be expected from him, immediately moved the question.

"'No matter, Mick,' said he, 'if you would give up the priests, we would get over that point; as it is, I'll give you a lift in the Commandments; and, as I said a while ago, if you take my advice I'll work up a creed for you that you may depend upon. But now for the Commandments. Let me see.

"'First: Thou shalt have no other gods but me. Don't you see, man, how that peppers the priests?

"'Second: Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

"'Third: Thou shalt not make to thyself—no—hang it, no: I'm out; that's the Second—very right. Third: Honour thy father and thy mother—you understand that, Mick? It means that you are bound to—to—just so—to honour your father and your mother, poor woman.'

"'My father—God be good to him—is dead near fourteen years, sir,' replied Mick.

"'Well, in that case, Mick, you see all that's left for you is to honour your mother—although I'm not certain of that either; the Commandments make no allowance at all for death, and in that case, why, living or dead, the surest way is to respect and obey them—that is—if the thing wer'n't impossible. I wish we had blind George M'Gin here, Mick, although he's as great a rogue as ever escaped hemp, yet he'd beat the devil himself at a knotty point.'

"'His breath would be bad about a dying man,' observed Mick.

"'Ay, or a living one,' said Vesey; 'however, let us get on—we were at the Third. Fourth: Thou shalt do no murder.'

"At the word murder Mick started, and gave a deep groan, whilst his eyes and features assumed a great and hollow expression, resembling that of a man struck with an immediate sense of horror and affright.

"'Oh, for heaven's sake, sir, stop there,' said Doran; 'that brings to my mind the business I had with you, Mr. Johnston.'

"'What is it about?' inquired Vengeance, in his usual eager manner.

"'Do you mind,' said Mick, 'that a paper was stuck one night upon your door, threatening you, if you wouldn't lave that farm you're in?'

"'I do; the blood-thirsty villains! but they knew a trick worth two of coming near me.'

"'Well,' said Mick, 'a strange man, that I had never seen before, come into me last night, and tould me, if I'd see you, to say that you would get a visit from the boys this night, and to take care of yourself.'

"'Give me the hand, Mick,' said Vengeance—'give me the hand: in spite of the priests, by the light of day, you're an honest fellow—This night, you say, they're to come? And what are the bloody wretches to do, Mick? But I needn't ask that, for I suppose it's to murder myself, and to burn my place.'

"'I'm afeard, sir, you're not far from the truth,' replied Mick; 'but, Mr. Johnston, for God's sake, don't mintion my name; for if you do, I'll get myself what they war laying out for you—be burned in my bed, maybe.'

"'Never fear, Mick,' replied Vengeance; 'your name will never cross my lips.'

"'It's a great thing,' said Mick, 'that would make me turn informer; but sure, only for your kindness and the goodness of your family, the Lord spare you to one another, mightn't I be dead long ago? I couldn't have one minute's peace if you or yours came to any harm when I could prevint it.'

"'Say no more, Mick,' said Vengeance, taking his hand again. 'I know that; leave the rest to me. But how do you find yourself, my poor fellow? you look weaker than you did, a good deal.'

"'Indeed, I'm going very fast, sir,' replied Mick; 'I know it'll soon be over with me.'

"'Hut, no, man,' said Vengeance, drawing his hand rapidly across his eyes, and clearing his voice. 'Not at all; don't say so: would a little broth serve you? or a bit of fresh meat?—or would you have a fancy for anything that I could make out for you? I'll get you wine, if you think it would do you good.'

"'God reward you,' said Mick, feebly—'God reward you, and open your eyes to the truth. Is my mother likely to come in, do you think?'

"'She must be here in a few minutes,' the other replied; 'she was waiting till they'd churn, that she might bring you down a little fresh milk and butter.'

"'I wish she was wid me,' said the poor lad, 'for I'm lonely wantin' her—her voice and the very touch of her hands goes to my heart. Mother, come to me—and let me lay my head upon your breast, agra machree, for I think it will be for the last time: we lived lonely, avourneen, wid none but ourselves—sometimes in happiness, when the nabours ud be kind to us—and sometimes in sorrow, when there ud be none to help us. It's all over now, mother, and I'm laving you for ever.'

"Vengeance wiped his eyes. 'Rouse yourself, Mick,' said he; 'rouse yourself.'

"'Who is that sitting along with you on the stool?' said Mick.

"'No one,' replied his neighbour—'but what's the matter with you, Mick?—your face is changed.'

"Mick, however, made no reply; but after a few slight struggles, in which he attempted to call upon his mother's name, he breathed his last. When Vengeance saw that he was dead—looked upon the cold, miserable hut in which this grateful and affectionate young man was stretched—and then reflected on the important service he had just rendered him, he could not suppress his tears.

"After sending down some of the females to assist his poor mother in laying him out, Vengeance went among his friends and acquaintances, informing them of the intelligence he had received, without mentioning the source from which he had it. After dusk that evening they all flocked as privately as possible to his house, to the number of thirty or forty, well provided with arms and ammunition. Some of them stationed themselves in the outhouses, some behind the garden hedge, and others in the dwelling-house."

When my brother had got thus far in his narrative, a tap came to the parlour-door, and immediately a stout-looking man, having the appearance of a labourer, entered the room.

"Well, Lachlin," said my brother, "what's the matter?"

"Why, sir," said Lachlin, scratching his head, "I had a bit of a favour to ax, if it would be plasin' to you to grant it to me."

"What is that?" said my brother.

"Do you know, sir," said he, "I haven't been at a wake—let us see—this two or three years, anyhow; and, if you'd have no objection, why, I'd slip up a while to Denis Kelly's; he's a distant relation of my own, sir; and blood's thicker than wather, you know."

"I'm just glad you came in, Lachlin," said my brother; "I didn't think of you—take a chair here, and never heed the wake to-night, but sit down and tell us about the attack on Vesey Vengeance long ago. I'll get you a tumbler of punch; and, instead of going to the wake, I will allow you to go to the funeral to-morrow."

"Ah, sir," said Lachlin, "you know whenever the punch is consarned I'm aisily persuaded; but not making little of your tumbler, sir," said the shrewd fellow, "I would get two or three of them if I went to the wake."

"Well, sit down," said my brother, handing him one, "and we won't permit you to get thirsty while you're talking, at all events."

"In throth, you haven't your heart in the likes of it," said Lachlin. "Gintlemen, your healths—*your* health, sir, and we're happy to see you wanst more. Why, thin, I remember you, sir, when you were a gorsoon, passing to school wid your satchell on your back; but I'll be bound, you're by no means as soople now as you were thin. Why, sir," turning to my brother, "he could fly, or kick football wid the rabbits.—Well, this is raal stuff!"

"Now, Lachlin," said my brother, "give us an account of the attack you made on Vesey Vengeance's house, at the Long Ridge, when all your party were chased out of the town."

"Why, thin, sir, I ought to be ashamed to mintion it; but you see, gintlemen, there was no getting over being connected wid them—for a man's life wouldn't be his own if he refused;—but I hope your brother's *safe*, sir!"

"Oh, perfectly safe, Lachlin; you may rest assured he'll never mention it."

"Well, sir," said Lachlin, addressing himself to me, "Vesey Vengeance was ——"

"Lachlin," said my brother, "he knows all about Vesey; just give an account of the attack."

"The attack, sir!—no, but the chivey we got over the mountains. Why, sir, we met in an ould empty house, you see, that belonged to the Farrells of Ballyboulteen, that went over to America that spring. There war none wid us, you may be sure, but them that war *up;* and in all we might be about sixty or seventy. The M'Guigans, one way or another, got it up first among them, bekase they expected that Mr. Simmons would take them back when he'd find that no one else dare venthur upon their land. There war at that time two fellows down from the county Longford in their neighbourhood, of the name of Collier—although that wasn't their right name—they were here upon their keeping, for the murder of a proctor in their own part of the country. One of them was a tall, powerful fellow, with sandy hair, and red brows; the other was a slender chap, that must have been drawn into it by his brother—for he was very mild and innocent, and always persuaded us agin evil. The M'Guigans brought lashings of whisky, and made them that war to go foremost amost drunk—these war the two Colliers, some of the strangers from behind the mountains, and a son of Widdy Doran's, that knew every inch about the place, for he was bred and born jist below the house a bit. He wasn't wid us, however, in regard of his brother being *under boord* that night; but, instid of him, Tim M'Guigan went to show the way up the little glin to the house, though, for that matther, the most of us knew as well as he did—but we didn't like to be the first to put a hand to it, if we could help it.

"At any rate, we sot in Farrell's empty house, drinking whisky, till they war all gathered, when about two dozen of them got the damp soot from the chimley, and rubbed it over their faces, making them so black that their own relations couldn't know them. We then went across the country in little lots of about six, or ten, or a score, and we war glad that the wake was in Widdy Doran's, seeing that, if anyone would meet us, we war going to it, you know, and the blackening of the faces would pass for a frolic; but there was no great danger of being met, for it was now long beyant midnight.

"Well, jintlemen, it puts me into a tremble, even at this time, to think of how little we cared about doing what we were bent upon. Them that had to manage the business war more than half drunk; and, hard fortune to me, but you would think it was to a wedding they went—some of them singing songs aginst the law—some of them quite merry, and laughing as if they had found a mare's nest. The big

fellow, Collier, had a dark lanthern wid a half-burned turf in it to light the bonfire, as they said ; others had guns and pistols—some of them charged, and some of them not ; some had bagnets, and ould rusty swords, pitchforks, and so on. Myself had nothing in my hand but the flail I was thrashing wid that day ; and to tell the thruth, the divil a step I would have gone with them, only for fraid of my health : for, as I said awhile agone, if any discovery was made afterwards, them that promised to go, and turned tail, would be marked as the informers. Neither was I so blind but I could see that there war plenty there that would stay away if they durst.

"Well, we went on till we came to a little dark corner below the house, where we met and held a council of war upon what we should do. Collier and the other strangers from behind the mountains war to go first, and the rest war to stand round the house at a distance—he carried the lantern, a bagnet, and a horse pistol ; and half a dozen more war to bring over bottles of straw from Vengeance's own haggard, to hould up to the thatch. It's all past and gone now—but three of the Reillys were desperate against Vesey that night, particularly one of them that he had shot about a year and a-half before—that is, peppered two of the right hand fingers off of him one night in a scuffle, as Vesey came home from an Orange-lodge. Well, all went on purty fair ; we had got as far as the outhouses, where we stopped to see if we could hear any noise ; but all was quiet as you plase.

"'Now, Vengeance,' says Reilly, swearing a terrible oath out of him—'you murdering Orange villain, you're going to get your pay,' says he.

"'Ay,' says M'Guigan, 'what he often threatened to others, he'll soon meet himself, plase God—come boys,' says he, 'bring the straw and light it, and just lay it up, my darlings, nicely to the thatch here, and ye'll see what a glorious bonfire we'll have of the black Orange villain's blankets in less than no time.'

"Some of us could hardly stand this. 'Stop, boys,' cried one of Dan Slevin's sons—'stop, Vengeance is bad enough, but his wife and childher never offended us—we'll not burn the place.

"'No,' said others, spaking out when they heard anybody at all having courage to do so—'it's too bad, boys, to burn the place ; for if we do,' says they, 'some of the innocent may be burned before they get out from the house, or even before they waken out of their sleep.'

"'Knock at the door first,' says Slevin, 'and bring Vengeance out ; let us cut the ears off of his head, and lave him.'

"'Damn him !' says another, 'let us not take the vagabone's life ; it's enough to take the ears from him, and to give him a *prod* or two of a bagnet on the ribs ; but don't kill him.'

"'Well, well' says Reilly, 'let us knock at the door, and get himself and the family out,' says he, 'and then we'll see what can be done wid him.'

"'Tattheration to me,' says the big Longford fellow, 'if he had sarved me, Reilly, as he did you, but I'd roast him in the flames of his own house,' says he.

"'I'd have *you* to know,' says Slevin, 'that you have no command here, Collier. I'm captain at the present time,' says he; 'and more nor what I wish shall not be done. Go over,' says he to the black faces, 'and rap him up.'

"Accordingly, they began to knock at the door, commanding Vengeance to get up and come out to them.

"'Come, Vengeance,' says Collier, 'put on you, my good fellow, and come out till two or three of your neighbours, that wish you well, gets a sight of your purty face, you babe of grace!'

"'Who are you that wants me at all?' says Vengeance from within.

"'Come out first,' says Collier; 'a few friends that has a crow to pluck with you: walk out, avourneen; or if you'd rather be roasted alive, why you may stay where you are,' says he.

"'Gentlemen,' says Vengeance, 'I have never, to my knowledge, offinded any of you; and I hope you won't be so cruel as to take an industrious, hard-working man from his family, in the clouds of the night, to do him an injury. Go home, gentlemen, in the name of God, and let me and mine alone. You're all mighty dacent gentlemen, you know, and I'm determined never to make or meddle with any of you. Sure, I know right well it's purtecting me you would be, dacent gentlemen. But I don't think there's any of my neighbours there, or they wouldn't stand by and see me injured.'

"'Thrue for you, avick,' says they, giving at the same time a terrible pattherrara agin the door with two or three big stones.

"'Stop, stop!' says Vengeance, 'don't break the door, and I'll open it. I know you're merciful, dacent gentlemen—I know you're merciful.'

"So the thief came and unbarred it quietly, and the next minute about a dozen of them that war within the house let slap at us. As God would have had it, the crowd didn't happen to be fornenst the door, or numbers of them would have been shot, and the night was dark, too, which was in our favour. The first volley was scarcely over when there was another slap from the outhouses: and after that, another from the gardens; and, after that, to be sure, we took to our scrapers. Several of them were badly wounded; but as for Collier, he was shot dead, and M'Guigan was taken prisoner, with five more, on the spot. There never was such a chase as we got; and only that they thought there was more of us in it, they might have tuck most of us prisoners.

"'Fly, boys!' says M'Guigan, as soon as they fired out of the house —'we've been sould,' says he, 'but I'll die game, anyhow'—and so he did, poor fellow; for although he and the other four war transported, one of them never sould the pass or stagged. Not but that they might have done it, for all that, only that there was a whisper sent to them that if they *did* a single sowl belonging to one of them wouldn't be left living. The M'Guigans were cousins of Denis Kelly's, that's now laid out there above.

"From the time this tuck place till after the 'sizes, there wasn't a

stir among them, on any side; but when they war over, the boys began to prepare. Denis, heavens be his bed, was there in his glory. This was in the spring 'sizes, and the May fair soon followed. Ah! that was the bloody sight, I'm tould—for I wasn't at it—atween the Orangemen and them. The Ribbonmen war bate, though, but not till after there was a desperate fight on both sides. I was tould that Denis Kelly that day knocked down five-and-twenty men in about three-quarters of an hour; and only that long John Grimes hot him a *polthoge* on the sconce with the butt-end of the gun, it was thought the Orangemen would be beat. That blow broke his skull, and was the manes of his death. He was carried home senseless."

"Well, Lachlin," said my brother, "if you didn't see it, I did. I happened to be looking out of John Carson's upper window—for it wasn't altogether safe to contemplate it within reach of the missiles. It was certainly a dreadful and a barbarous sight. You have often observed the calm, gloomy silence that precedes a thunderstorm; and had you been there that day you might have seen it illustrated in a scene much more awful. The thick living mass of people extended from the corner-house, nearly a quarter of a mile, at this end of the town, up to the parsonage on the other side. During the early part of the day, every kind of business was carried on in a hurry and an impatience which denoted the little chance they knew there would be for transacting it in the evening.

"Up to the hour of four o'clock the fair was unusually quiet, and, on the whole, presented nothing in any way remarkable; but after that hour you might observe the busy stir and hum of the mass settling down into a deep, brooding, portentous silence, that was absolutely fearful. The females, with dismay and terror pictured in their faces, hurried home; and in various instances you might see mothers, and wives, and sisters clinging about the sons, husbands, and brothers, attempting to drag them by main force from the danger which they knew impended over them. In this they seldom succeeded; for the person so urged was usually compelled to tear himself from them by superior strength.

"The pedlars, and basket-women, and such as had tables and standings erected in the streets, commenced removing them with all possible haste. The shopkeepers, and other inhabitants of the town, put up their shutters, in order to secure their windows from being shattered. Strangers, who were compelled to stop in town that night, took shelter in the inns and other houses of entertainment where they lodged; so that about five o'clock the street was completely clear and free for action.

"Hitherto there was not a stroke—the scene became even more silent and gloomy, although the moral darkness of their ill-suppressed passions was strongly contrasted with the splendour of the sun, that poured down a tide of golden light upon the multitude. This contrast between the natural brightness of the evening and the internal gloom of their hearts, as the beams of the sun rested upon the ever-moving crowd, would, to any man who knew the impetuosity with

which the spirit of religious hatred was soon to rage among them, produce novel and singular sensations. For, after all, Toby there is a mysterious connection between natural and moral things, which often invests both nature and sentiment with a feeling that certainly would not come home to our hearts if such a connection did not exist. A rose-tree beside a grave will lead us from sentiment to reflection; and any other association, where a painful or melancholy thought is clothed with a garb of joy or pleasure, will strike us more deeply in proportion as the contrast is strong. On seeing the sun or moon struggling through the darkness of surrounding clouds, I confess, although you may smile, that I feel for the moment a diminution of enjoyment—something taken, as it were, from the sum of my happiness.

"Ere the quarrel commenced you might see a dark and hateful glare scowling from the countenances of the two parties as they viewed and approached each other in the street—the eye was set in deadly animosity, and the face marked with an ireful paleness, occasioned at once by revenge and apprehension. Groups were silently hurrying with an eager and energetic step to their places of rendezvous, grasping their weapons more closely, or grinding their teeth in the impatience of their fury. The veterans on each side were surrounded by their respective followers, anxious to act under their direction; and the very boys seemed to be animated with a martial spirit, much more eager than that of those who had greater experience in party quarrels.

"Jem Finigan's public-house was the head-quarters and rallying point of the Ribbonmen; the Orangemen assembled in that of Joe Sherlock, the master of an Orange-lodge. About six o'clock the crowd in the street began gradually to fall off to the opposite ends of the town—the Roman Catholics towards the north, the Protestants towards the south. Carson's window, from which I was observing their motions, was exactly half way between them, so that I had a distinct view of both. At this moment I noticed Dennis Kelly coming forward from the closely condensed mass formed by the Ribbonmen: he advanced, with his cravat off, to the middle of the vacant space between the parties, holding a fine oak cudgel in his hand. He then stopped, and addressing the Orangemen, said:

"'Where's Vengeance and his crew now? Is there any single Orange villain among you that dare come down and meet me here, like a man? Is John Grimes there? for if he is, before we begin to take you *out of a face*—to hunt you altogether out of the town, ye Orange villains—I would be glad that he'd step down to Denis Kelly here for two or three minutes—I'll not keep him longer.'

"There was now a stir and a murmur among the Orangemen, as if a rush was about to take place towards Denis; but Grimes, whom I saw endeavouring to curb them in, left the crowd and advanced towards him.

"At this moment an instinctive movement among both masses took place; so that when Grimes had come within a few yards of Kelly, both parties were within two or three perches of them. Kelly was

standing apparently off his guard, with one hand thrust carelessly into the breast of his waistcoat, and the cudgel in the other ; but his eye was fixed calmly upon Grimes as he approached. They were both powerful, fine men—brawny, vigorous, and active : Grimes had somewhat the advantage of the other in height ; he also fought with his left hand, from which circumstance he was nicknamed *Kitthouge*. He was a man of a dark, stern-looking countenance ; and the tones of his voice were deep, sullen, and of appalling strength.

"As they approached each other, the windows on each side of the street were crowded ; but there was not a breath to be heard in any direction, nor from either party. As for myself, my heart palpitated with anxiety. What *they* might have felt I do not know : but they must both have experienced considerable apprehension ; for as they were the champions of their respective parties, and had never before met in single encounter, their characters depended on the issue of the contest.

"'Well, Grimes,' said Denis, 'sure I've often wished for this same meetin', man, betune myself and you ; I have what you're going to get, *in* for you this long time ; but you'll get it now, avick, plase God ——'

"'It was not to scould I came, you Popish, ribly rascal,' replied Grimes, 'but to give you what you're long ——'

"Ere the word had been out of his mouth, however, Kelly sprung over to him ; and making a feint, as if he intended to lay the stick on his ribs, he swung it past without touching him, and, bringing it round his own head like lightning, made it tell with a powerful back-stroke right on Grimes's temple, and in an instant his own face was sprinkled with the blood which sprung from the wound. Grimes staggered forward towards his antagonist, seeing which, Kelly sprung back, and was again meeting him with full force, when Grimes, turning a little, clutched Kelly's stick in his right hand, and being left-handed himself, ere the other could wrench the cudgel from him, he gave him a terrible blow upon the back part of the head, which laid Kelly in the dust.

"There was then a deafening shout from the Orange party ; and Grimes stood until Kelly should be in the act of rising, ready then to give him another blow. The coolness and generalship of Kelly, however, were here very remarkable ; for, when he was just getting to his feet, 'Look at your party coming down upon me !' he exclaimed to Grimes, who turned round to order them back, and in the interim Kelly was upon his legs.

"I was surprised at the coolness of both men ; for Grimes was by no means inflated with the boisterous triumph of his party—nor did Denis get into a blind rage on being knocked down. They approached again, their eyes kindled into savage fury, tamed down into the wariness of experienced combatants ; for a short time they stood eyeing each other, as if calculating upon the contingent advantages of attack or defence. This was a moment of great interest ; for, as their huge and powerful frames stood out in opposition, strung and dilated by passion and the energy of contest, no judgment, however experienced, could venture to anticipate the result of the battle, or name the person likely to be victorious. Indeed, it was surprising how the

natural sagacity of these men threw their movements into scientific form and elegance. Kelly raised his cudgel, and placed it transversely in the air between himself and his opponent; Grimes instantly placed his against it—both weapons thus forming a St. Andrew's cross—whilst the men themselves stood foot to foot, calm and collected. Nothing could be finer than their proportions, nor superior to their respective attitudes; their broad chests were in a line—their thick, well-set necks, laid a little back, as were their bodies—without, however, losing their balance—and their fierce, but calm features, grimly, but placidly scowling at each other, like men who were prepared for the onset.

"At length, Kelly made an attempt to repeat his former feint, with variations; for whereas he had sent the first blow to Grimes's right temple, he took measures now to reach the left; his action was rapid, but equally quick was the eye of his antagonist, whose cudgel was up in ready guard to meet the blow. It met it; and with such surprising power was it sent and opposed that both cudgels, on meeting, bent across each other into curves. An involuntary huzza followed this from their respective parties—not so much on account of the skill displayed by the combatants, as in admiration of their cudgels, and of the judgment with which they must have been selected. In fact, it was the staves, rather than the men, that were praised; and certainly the former did their duty. In a moment their shillelaghs were across each other once more, and the men resumed their former attitudes; their savage determination, their kindled eyes, the blood which disfigured the face of Grimes, and begrimed also the countenance of his antagonist into a deeper expression of ferocity, occasioned many a cowardly heart to shrink from the sight. There they stood, gory and stern, ready for the next onset; it was first made by Grimes, who tried to practise on Kelly the feint which Kelly had before practised on him. Denis, after his usual manner, caught the blow in his open hand, and clutched the staff with an intention of holding it until he might visit Grimes—now apparently unguarded—with a levelling blow; but Grimes's effort to wrest the cudgel from his grasp drew all Kelly's strength to that quarter, and prevented him from availing himself of the other's defenceless attitude. A trial of muscular power ensued, and their enormous bodily strength was exhibited in the stiff tug for victory. Kelly's address prevailed; for while Grimes pulled against him with all his collected vigour, the former suddenly let go his hold, and the latter, having lost his balance, staggered back: lightning could not be more quick than the action of Kelly, as, with tremendous force, his cudgel rung on the unprotected head of Grimes, who fell, or rather was shot to the ground, as if some superior power had dashed him against it; and there he lay for a short time, quivering under the blow he had received.

"A peal of triumph now arose from Kelly's party; but Kelly himself, placing his arms akimbo, stood calmly over his enemy, awaiting his return to the conflict. For nearly five minutes he stood in this attitude, during which time Grimes did not stir; at length Kelly stooped a little, and peering closely into his face, exclaimed:

"'Why, then, is it acting you are? anyhow, I wouldn't put it past you, you cunning vagabone; 'tis lying to take breath he is—get up, man, I'd scorn to touch you till you're on your legs; not all as one, for sure it's yourself would show *me* no such forbearance. Up with you, man alive, I've none of your own thrachery in me. I'll not *rise* my cudgel till you're on your guard.'

There was an expression of disdain mingled with a glow of honest, manly generosity on his countenance as he spoke, which made him at once the favourite with such spectators as were not connected with either of the parties. Grimes arose; and it was evident that Kelly's generosity deepened his resentment more than the blow which had sent him so rapidly to the ground; however, he was still cool, but his brows knit, his eye flashed with double fierceness, and his complexion settled into a dark-blue shade, which gave to his whole visage an expression fearfully ferocious. Kelly hailed this as the first appearance of passion; *his* brow expanded as the other approached, and a dash of confidence, if not of triumph, softened, in some degree, the sternness of his features.

"With caution they encountered again, each collected for a spring, their eyes gleaming at each other like those of tigers. Grimes made a motion as if he would have struck Kelly with his fist; and, as the latter threw up his guard against the blow, he received a stroke from Grimes's cudgel on the under part of the right arm. This had been directed at his elbow, with an intention of rendering the arm powerless; it fell short, however, yet was sufficient to relax the grasp which Kelly held of his weapon. Had Kelly been a novice, this stratagem alone would have soon vanquished him; his address, however, was fully equal to that of his antagonist. The staff dropped instantly from his grasp, but a stout thong of black polished leather, with a shining tassel at the end of it, had bound it securely to his massive wrist; the cudgel, therefore, only dangled from his arm, and did not, as the other expected, fall to the ground, or put Denis to the necessity of stooping for it—Grimes's object being to have struck him in that attitude.

"A flash of indignation now shot from Kelly's eye, and with the speed of lightning he sprung within Grimes's weapon, determined to wrest it from him. The grapple that ensued was gigantic. In a moment Grimes's staff was parallel with the horizon between them, clutched in the powerful grasp of both. They stood exactly opposite, and rather close to each other; their arms sometimes stretched out stiff and at full length, again contracted, until their faces, glowing and distorted by the energy of the contest, were drawn almost together. Sometimes the prevailing strength of one would raise the staff slowly, and with gradually developed power, up in a perpendicular position; again, the re-action of opposing strength would strain it back, and sway the weighty frame of the antagonist, crouched and set into desperate resistance, along with it; whilst the hard pebbles under their feet were crumbled into powder, and the very street itself furrowed into gravel by the shock of their opposing strength. Indeed, so well matched a

pair never met in contest ; their strength, their wind, their activity, and their natural science appeared to be perfectly equal.

"At length, by a tremendous effort, Kelly got the staff twisted nearly out of Grimes's hand, and a short shout, half encouraging, half indignant, came from Grimes's party. This added shame to his other passions, and threw an impulse of almost superhuman strength into him: he recovered his advantage, but nothing more ; they twisted—they heaved their great frames against each other—they struggled—their action became rapid—they swayed each other this way and that—their eyes like fire—their teeth locked, and their nostrils dilated. Sometimes they twined about each other like serpents, and twirled round with such rapidity that it was impossible to distinguish them—sometimes, when a pull of more than ordinary power took place, they seemed to cling together almost without motion, bending down until their heads nearly touched the ground, their cracking joints seeming to stretch by the effort, and the muscles of their limbs standing out from the flesh, strung in amazing tension.

"In this attitude were they, when Denis, with the eye of a hawk, spied a disadvantage in Grimes's position ; he wheeled round, placed his broad shoulder against the shaggy breast of the other, and giving him what is called an 'inside crook,' strained him, despite of every effort, until he fairly got him on his shoulder, and off the point of resistance. There was a cry of alarm from the windows, particularly from the females, as Grimes's huge body was swung over Kelly's shoulder, until it came down in a crash upon the hard gravel of the street, while Denis stood in triumph, with his enemy's staff in his hand. A loud huzza followed this from all present except the Orangemen, who stood bristling with fury and shame for the temporary defeat of their champion.

"Denis again had his enemy at his mercy ; but he scorned to use his advantage ungenerously ; he went over, and placing the staff in his hands—for the other had got to his legs—retrograded to his place, and desired Grimes to defend himself.

"After considerable manœuvering on both sides, Denis, who appeared to be the more active of the two, got an open on his antagonist, and by a powerful blow upon Grimes's ear sent him to the ground with amazing force. I never saw such a blow given by mortal ; the end of the cudgel came exactly upon the ear, and as Grimes went down the blood spurted out of his mouth and nostrils ; he then kicked convulsively several times as he lay upon the ground, and that moment I really thought he would never have breathed more.

"The shout was again raised by the Ribbonmen, who threw up their hats, and bounded from the ground with the most vehement exultation. Both parties then waited to give Grimes time to rise and renew the battle ; but he appeared perfectly contented to remain where he was, for there appeared no signs of life or motion in him.

"'Have you got your *gruel*, boy?' said Kelly, going over to where he lay. 'Well, you met Denis Kelly, at last, didn't you? and there you lie ; but, plase God, the most of your sort will soon lie in the

same state. Come, boys,' said Kelly, addressing his own party, 'now for bloody Vengeance and his crew, that thransported the M'Guigans and the Caffries, and murdered Collier. Now, boys, have at the murderers, and let us have satisfaction for all!'

"A mutual rush instantly took place; but, ere the Orangemen came down to where Grimes lay, Kelly had taken his staff, and handed it to one of his own party. It is impossible to describe the scene that ensued. The noise of the blows, the shouting, the yelling, the groans, the scalped heads and gory visages, gave both to the eye and the ear an impression that could not easily be forgotten. The battle was obstinately maintained on both sides for nearly an hour and with a skill of manœuvering, attack, and retreat that was astonishing.

"Both parties arranged themselves against each other, forming something like two lines of battle, and these extended along the town nearly from one end to the other. It was curious to remark the difference in the persons and appearances of the combatants. In the Orange line the men were taller and of more powerful frames; but the Ribbonmen were more hardy, active, and courageous. Man to man, notwithstanding their superior bodily strength, the Orangemen could never fight the others; the former depend too much upon their fire and side-arms, but they are by no means so well trained to the use of the cudgel as their enemies. In the district where the scene of this fight is laid, the Catholics generally inhabit the mountainous part of the country, to which, when the civil feuds of worse times prevailed, they had been driven at the point of the bayonet; the Protestants and Presbyterians, on the other hand, who came in upon their possessions, occupy the richer and more fertile tracts of the land, living, of course, more wealthily, with less labour, and on better food. The characteristic features produced by these causes are such as might be expected—the Catholic being, like his soil, hardy, thin, and capable of bearing all weathers; and the Protestants, larger, softer, and more inactive.

"Their advance to the first onset was far different from a faction fight. There existed a silence here that powerfully evinced the inextinguishable animosity with which they encountered. For some time they fought in two compact bodies, that remained unbroken so long as the chances of victory were doubtful. Men went down, and were up, and went down in all directions with uncommon rapidity; and as the weighty phalanx of Orangemen stood out against the nimble line of their mountain adversaries, the intrepid spirit of the latter, and their surprising skill and activity, soon gave symptoms of a gradual superiority in the conflict. In the course of about half an hour the Orange party began to give way in the northern end of the town; and, as their opponents pressed them warmly and with unsparing hand, the heavy mass formed by their numbers began to break, and this decomposition ran up their line, until in a short time they were thrown into utter confusion. They now fought in detached parties; but these subordinate conflicts, though shorter in duration than the shock of the general battle, were much more inhuman and destructive; for whenever any particular gang succeeded in putting their adversaries to

flight, they usually ran to the assistance of their friends in the nearest fight—by which means they often fought three to one. In these instances the persons inferior in number suffered such barbarities as it would be painful to detail.

"There lived a short distance out of the town a man nicknamed Jemsy Boccagh, on account of his lameness—he was also sometimes called 'Hip-an'-go-constant'—who fell the first victim to party spirit. He had got arms on seeing his friends likely to be defeated, and had the hardihood to follow, with charged bayonet, a few Ribbonmen, whom he attempted to intercept as they fled from a large number of their enemies, who had got them separated from their comrades. Boccagh ran across a field, in order to get before them on the road, and was in the act of climbing a ditch, when one of them, who carried a spade-shaft, struck him a blow on the head which put an end to his existence.

"This circumstance imparted, of course, fiercer hatred to both parties—triumph inspiring the one, a thirst for vengeance nerving the other. Kelly inflicted tremendous punishment in every direction; for scarcely a blow fell from him which did not bring a man to the ground. It absolutely resembled a military engagement, for the number of combatants amounted at least to two thousand men. In many places the street was covered with small pools and clots of blood which flowed from those who lay insensible—while others were borne away bleeding, groaning, or staggering, having been battered into a total unconsciousness of the scene about them.

"At length the Orangemen gave way, and their enemies, yelling with madness and revenge, began to beat them with unrestrained fury. The former, finding that they could not resist the impetuous tide which burst upon them, fled back past the church, and stopped not until they had reached an elevation, on which lay two or three heaps of stones, that had been collected for the purpose of paving the streets. Here they made a stand, and commenced a vigorous discharge of them against their pursuers. This checked the latter; and the others, seeing them hesitate, and likely to retreat from the missiles, pelted them with such effect that the tables became turned, and the Ribbonmen made a speedy flight back into the town.

"In the meantime several Orangemen had gone into Sherlock's, where a considerable number of arms had been deposited, with an intention of resorting to them in case of a defeat at the cudgels. These now came out, and met the Ribbonmen on their flight from those who were pelting them with the stones. A dreadful scene ensued. The Ribbonmen, who had the advantage in numbers, finding themselves intercepted before by those who had arms, and pursued behind by those who had recourse to the stones, fought with uncommon bravery and desperation. Kelly, who was furious, but still collected and decisive, shouted out in Irish, lest the opposite party might understand him, 'Let every *two* men seize upon *one* of those who have the arms.'

"This was attempted, and effected with partial success: and I have

no doubt but the Orangemen would have been ultimately beaten and deprived of their weapons, were it not that many of them, who had got their pistols out of Sherlock's, discharged them among their enemies, and wounded several. The Catholics could not stand this: but, wishing to retaliate as effectually as possible, lifted stones wherever they could find them, and kept up the fight at a distance as they retreated. On both sides, wherever a solitary foe was caught straggling from the rest, he was instantly punished with a most cruel and bloodthirsty spirit.

"It was just about this time that I saw Kelly engaged with two men, whom he kept at bay with great ease—retrograding, however, as he fought, towards his own party. Grimes, who had some time before this recovered and joined the fight once more, was returning, after having pursued several of the Ribbonmen past the market-house, where he spied Kelly thus engaged. With a volunteer gun in his hand, and furious with the degradation of his former defeat, he ran over and struck him with the butt-end of it upon the temple, and Denis fell. When the stroke was given an involuntary cry of 'Murder—foul, foul!' burst from those who looked on from the windows; and long John Steele, Grimes's father-in-law, in indignation raised his cudgel to knock him down for this treacherous and malignant blow; but a person out of Neal Cassidy's back-yard hurled a round stone, about six pounds in weight, at Grimes's head, that felled him to the earth, leaving him as insensible, and nearly in as dangerous a state, as Kelly—for his jaw was broken.

"By this time the Catholics had retreated out of the town, and Denis might probably have received more punishment had those who were returning from the pursuit recognised him; but James Wilson, seeing the dangerous situation in which he lay, came out, and, with the assistance of his servant-man, brought him into his own house. When the Orangemen had driven their adversaries off the field, they commenced the most hideous yellings through the streets—got music and played party tunes—offered any money for the face of a Papist; and any of that religion who were so unfortunate as to make their appearance were beaten in the most relentless manner. It was precisely the same thing on the part of the Ribbonmen; if a Protestant, but above all an Orangeman, came in their way, he was sure to be treated with barbarity: for the retaliation on either side was dreadfully unjust—the innocent suffering as well as the guilty. Leaving the window, I found Kelly in a bad state below stairs.

"'What's to be done?' said I to Wilson.

"'I know not,' replied he, 'except I put him between us on my jaunting car and drive him home.'

"This appeared decidedly the best plan we could adopt; so, after putting to the horse, we placed him on the car, sitting one on each side of him, and in this manner left him at his own house.

"'Did you run no risk,' said I, 'in going among Kelly's friends, whilst they were under the influence of party feeling and exasperated passion?'

"'No,' said he; 'we had rendered many of them acts of kindness, and had never exhibited any spirit but a *friendly* one towards them; and such individuals, but only such, *might walk through a crowd of enraged Catholics or Protestants quite unmolested.*'

"The next morning Kelly's landlord, Sir W. R——, and two magistrates, were at his house, but he lay like a log, without sense or motion. Whilst they were there, Surgeon S——e arrived, and, after examining his head, declared that the skull was fractured. During that and the following day the house was surrounded by crowds, anxious to know his state; and nothing might be heard amongst most of them but loud and undisguised expressions of the most ample revenge. The wife was frantic; and, on seeing me, hid her face in her hands, exclaiming:

"'Ah, sir, I knew it would come to this; and you, too, tould him the same thing. *My* curse and *God's* curse on it for quarrelling! Will it never stop in the counthry, till they rise some time, and murdher one another out of the face!'

"As soon as the swelling in his head was reduced, Surgeon S——e performed the operation of trepanning, and thereby saved his life; but his strength and intellect were gone—and he just lingered for four months, a feeble, drivelling simpleton, until, in consequence of a cold, which produced inflammation in the brain, he died, as hundreds have died, the victim of party spirit."

Such was the account which I heard of my old schoolfellow, Denis Kelly; and, indeed, when I reflected upon the nature of the education he received, I could not but admit that the consequences were such as might naturally be expected to result from it.

The next morning a relation of Mrs. Kelly's came down to my brother, hoping that, as they wished to have as decent a funeral as possible, he would be so kind as to attend it.

"Musha, God knows, sir," said the man, "it's poor Denis, heavens be his bed! that had the regard and reverence for everyone, young and ould, of your father's family; and it's himself that would be the proud man, if he was living, to see you, sir, riding after his coffin."

"Well," said my brother, "let Mrs. Kelly know that I shall certainly attend, and so will my brother, here, who has come to pay me a visit. Why, I believe, Tom, you forget him!"

"Your brother, sir! Is it Master Toby, that used to cudgel the half of the counthry when he was at school? Gad's my life, *Masther* Toby (I was now about thirty-six), but it's your four quarters, sure enough! Arrah, thin, sir, who'd think it—you're grown so full and stout?—but, faix, you'd always the bone in you! Ah, Masther Toby!" said he, "he's lying cowld, this morning, that would be the happy man to lay his eyes wanst more upon you. Many an' many's the winther's evening did he spind talking about the time when you and he were bouchals together, and of the pranks you played at school, but especially of the time you both leathered the four Grogans, and tuck the apples from them—my poor fellow!—and now to be stretched a corpse, lavin' his poor widdy and childher behind him!"

I accordingly expressed my sorrow for Denis's death, which, indeed, I sincerely regretted, for he possessed materials for an excellent character, had not all that was amiable and good in him been permitted to run wild.

As soon as my trunk and travelling-bag had been brought from the inn where I had left them the preceding night, we got our horses, and, as we wished to show particular respect to Denis's remains, rode up, with some of our friends, to the house. When we approached, there were large crowds of the country-people before the door of his well-thatched and respectable-looking dwelling, which had three chimneys, and a set of sash-windows, clean and well-glazed. On our arrival I was soon recognised and surrounded by numbers of those to whom I had formerly been known, who received and welcomed me with a warmth of kindness and sincerity which it would be in vain to look for among the peasantry of any other nation.

Indeed, I have uniformly observed that when no religious or political feeling influences the heart and principles of an Irish peasant, he is singularly sincere and faithful in his attachments, and has always a bias to the generous and the disinterested. To my own knowledge, circumstances frequently occur in which the ebullition of party spirit is altogether temporary, subsiding after the cause that produced it has passed away, and leaving the kind peasant to the naturally affectionate and generous impulses of his character. But poor *Paddy*, unfortunately, is as combustible a material in politics or religion as in fighting—thinking it his duty to take the weak [1] side, without any other consideration than because it is the weak side.

When we entered the house I was almost suffocated with the strong fumes of tobacco-smoke, snuff, and whisky; and, as I had been an old schoolfellow of Denis's, my appearance was the signal for a general burst of grief among his relations, in which the more distant friends and neighbours of the deceased joined, to keep up the *keening*.

I have often, indeed always, felt that there is something extremely touching in the Irish cry; in fact, that it breathes the very spirit of wild and natural sorrow. The Irish peasantry, whenever a death takes place, are exceedingly happy in seizing upon any contingent circumstances that may occur, and making them subservient to the excitement of grief for the departed, or the exultation and praise of his character and virtues. My entrance was a proof of this—I had scarcely advanced to the middle of the floor, when my intimacy with the

[1] A gentleman once told me an anecdote of which he was an eye-witness. Some peasants, belonging to opposite factions, had met under peculiar circumstances; there were, however, two on one side, and four on the other. In this case there was likely to be no fight; but, in order to balance the number, one of the more numerous party joined the weak side—"Bekase, boys, it would be a burnin' shame, so it would, for four to kick two; and, except I join them, by the powers, there's no chance of their being a bit of sport, or a row, at all at all!" Accordingly, he did join them, and the result of it was that he and his party were victorious; so honestly did he fight!

deceased, our boyish sports, and even our quarrels were adverted to with a natural eloquence and pathos that, in spite of my firmness, occasioned me to feel the prevailing sorrow. They spoke, or chaunted mournfully, in Irish; but the substance of what they said was as follows:—

"Oh, Denis, Denis, avourneen! you're lying low, this morning of sorrow?—lying low, are you, and does not know who it is (alluding to me) that is standing over you, weeping for the days you spent together in your youth! It's yourself, *acushla agus asthore machree* (the pulse and beloved of my heart), that would stretch out the right hand warmly to welcome him to the place of his birth, where you had both been so often happy about the green hills and valleys with each other! He's here now, standing over you; and it's he, of all his family, kind and respectable as they are, that was your own favourite, Denis *avourneen dheelish!* He alone was the companion that you loved!—with no other could you be happy!—For him did you fight, when he wanted a friend in your young quarrels! and if you had a dispute with him, were not you sorry for it? Are you not now stretched in death before him, and will he not forgive you?"

All this was uttered, of course, extemporaneously, and without the least preparation. They then passed on to an enumeration of his virtues as a father, a husband, son, and brother—specified his worth as he stood related to society in general, and his kindness as a neighbour and a friend.

An occurrence now took place which may serve in some measure to throw light upon many of the atrocities and outrages which take place in Ireland. Before I mention it, however, I think it necessary to make a few observations relative to it. I am convinced that those who are intimately acquainted with the Irish peasantry will grant that there is not on the earth a class of people in whom the domestic affections of blood-relationship are so pure, strong, and sacred. The birth of a child will occasion a poor man to break in upon the money set apart for his landlord, in order to keep the christening among his friends and neighbours with due festivity. A marriage exhibits a spirit of joy, an exuberance of happiness and delight, to be found only in the Green Island; and the death of a member of a family is attended with a sincerity of grief scarcely to be expected from men so much the creatures of the more mirthful feelings. In fact, their sorrow is a solecism in humanity—at once deep and loud—mingled up, even in its greatest paroxysms, with a laughter-loving spirit. It is impossible that an Irishman, sunk in the lowest depths of affliction, could permit his grief to flow in all the sad solemnity of affliction, even for a day, without some glimpse of his natural humour throwing a faint and rapid light over the gloom within him. No: there is an amalgamation of sentiments in his mind which, as I said before, would puzzle any philosopher to account for. Yet it would be wrong to say, though his grief has something of an unsettled and ludicrous character about it, that he is incapable of the most subtle and delicate shades of sentiment, or the deepest and most desolating intensity of sorrow.

But he laughs off those heavy vapours which hang about the moral constitution of the people of other nations, giving them a morbid habit which leaves them neither strength nor firmness to resist calamity, which they feel less keenly than an Irishman, exactly as a healthy man will feel the pangs of death with more acuteness than one who is wasted away by debility and decay. Let any man witness an emigration, and he will satisfy himself that this is true. I am convinced that Goldsmith's inimitable description of one in his "Deserted Village" was a picture drawn from actual observation. Let him observe the emigrant as he crosses the Atlantic, and he will find, although he joins the jest, and the laugh, and the song, that he will seek a silent corner or a silent hour to indulge the sorrow which he still feels for the friends, the companions, and the native fields that he has left behind him. This constitution of mind is beneficial: the Irishman seldom or never hangs himself, because he is capable of too much real feeling to permit himself to become the slave of that which is factitious. There is no void in his affections or sentiments which a morbid and depraved sensibility could occupy; but his feelings, of what character soever they may be, are strong, because they are fresh and healthy. For this reason, I maintain that when the domestic affections come under the influence of either grief or joy, the peasantry of no nation are capable of feeling so deeply. Even on the ordinary occasions of death, sorrow, though it alternates with mirth and cheerfulness in a manner peculiar to themselves, lingers long in the unseen recesses of domestic life: *any hand, therefore, whether by law or violence, that plants a wound* HERE, *will suffer to the death.*

When my brother and I entered the house the body had just been put into the coffin; and it is usual after this takes place, and before it is nailed down, for the immediate relatives of the family to embrace the deceased, and take their last look and farewell of his remains. In the present instance, the children were brought over, one by one, to perform that trying and melancholy ceremony. The first was an infant on the breast, whose little innocent mouth was held down to that of its dead father; the babe smiled upon his still and solemn features, and would have played with his grave clothes, but that the murmur of unfeigned sorrow which burst from all present, occasioned it to be removed. The next was a fine little girl of three or four years, who inquired where they were going to bring her daddy, and asked if he would not soon come back to *her*.

"My daddy's sleepin' a long time," said the child, "but I'll waken him till he sings me 'Peggy Slevin.' I like my daddy best, bekase I sleep wid him—and he brings me good things from the fair; he bought me this ribbon," said she, pointing to a ribbon which he had purchased for her.

The rest of the children were sensible of their loss, and truly it was a distressing scene. His eldest son and daughter, the former about fourteen, the latter about two years older, lay on the coffin, kissing his lips, and were with difficulty torn away from it.

"Oh!" said the boy, "he is going from us, and night or day we will

never see him or hear of him more! Oh! father—father—is that the last sight we are ever to see of your face? Why, father dear, did you die, and leave us for ever—for ever? Wasn't your heart good to us, and your words kind to us? Oh! your last smile is smiled—your last kiss given—and your last kind word spoken to your childhre that you loved, and that loved you as we did. Father, core of my heart, are you gone for ever, and your voice departed? Oh! the murdherers, oh! the murdherers, the murdherers!" he exclaimed, "that killed my father; for only for them he would be still wid us: but, by the God that's over me, if I live, night or day I will not rest till I have blood for blood; nor do I care who hears it, nor if I was hanged the next minute."[1]

As these words escaped him, a deep and awful murmur of suppressed vengeance burst from his relations. At length their sorrow became too strong to be repressed; and as it was the time to take their last embrace and look of him, they came up, and after fixing their eyes on his face in deep affliction, their lips began to quiver, and their countenances became convulsed. They then burst out simultaneously into a tide of violent grief, which, after having indulged in it for some time, they checked. But the resolution of revenge was stronger than their grief, for, standing over his dead body, they repeated, almost word for word, the vow of vengeance which the son had just sworn. It was really a scene dreadfully and terribly solemn; and I could not avoid reflecting upon the mystery of nature, which can, from the deep power of domestic affection, cause to spring a determination to crime of so black a dye. Would to God that our peasantry had a clearer sense of moral and religious duties, and were not left so much as they are to the headlong impulse of an ardent temperament and an impetuous character; and would to God that the clergy who superintend their education and morals had a better knowledge of human nature!

During all this time the heart-broken widow sat beyond the coffin, looking upon what passed with a stupid sense of bereavement; and when they had all performed this last ceremony, it was found necessary to tell her that the time was come for the procession of the funeral, and that they only waited for her to take, as the rest did, her last look and embrace of her husband. When she heard this, it pierced her like an arrow: she became instantly collected, and her complexion assumed a dark sallow shade of despairing anguish, which it was an affliction even to look upon. She then stooped over the coffin, and kissed him several times, after which she ceased sobbing, and lay silently with her mouth to his.

The character of a faithful wife sorrowing for a beloved husband has that in it which compels both respect and sympathy. There was not at this moment a dry eye in the house. She still lay silent on the coffin; but, as I observed that her bosom seemed not to heave as it did a little before, I was convinced that she had become insensible. I

[1] Such were the words.

accordingly beckoned to Kelly's brother, to whom I mentioned what I had suspected; and, on his going over to ascertain the truth, he found her as I had said. She was then brought to the air, and after some trouble recovered; but I recommended them to put her to bed, and not to subject her to any unnecessary anguish by a custom which was really too soul-piercing to endure. This, however, was, in her opinion, the violation of an old rite sacred to her heart and affections—she would not hear of it for an instant. Again she was helped out between her brother and brother-in-law; and, after stooping down, and doing as the others had done—

"Now," said she, "I will sit here, and keep him under my eye as long as I can—surely you won't blame me for it; you all know the kind husband he was to me, and the good right I have to be sorry for him! Oh!" she added, "is it thrue at all?—is he my own Denis, the young husband of my early—and my first love, in good arnest, dead, and going to leave me here—me, Denis, that you loved so tindherly, and our childher, that your brow was never clouded against? Can I believe myself, or is it a dhrame? Denis, *avick machree! avick machree!* your hand was dreaded, and a good right it had, for it was the manly hand, that was ever and always raised in defence of them that wanted a friend; abroad, in the faction-fight, against the oppressor, your name was ever feared, *acushla!*—but *at home*—AT HOME—*where was your fellow?* Denis achra, do you know the lips that's spaking to you?—your young bride—your heart's light. Oh! I remimber the day you war married to me like yesterday. Oh! avourneen, then and since wasn't the heart of your own Honor bound up in you—yet not a word even to me. Well, agra machree, 'tisn't your fault, it's the first time you ever refused to spake to your own Honor. But you're dead, avourneen, or it wouldn't be so—you're dead before my eyes—husband of my heart, and all my hopes and happiness goes into the coffin and the grave along wid you for ever!"

All this time she was rocking herself from side to side, her complexion pale and ghastly as could be conceived. When the coffin was about to be closed, she retired until it was nailed down, after which she returned with her bonnet and cloak on her, ready to accompany it to the grave. I was astonished—for I thought she could not have walked two steps without assistance; but it was the custom, and to neglect it, I found, would have thrown the imputation of insincerity upon her grief. While they were preparing to bring the coffin out, I could hear the chat and conversation of those who were standing in crowds before the door, and occasionally a loud, vacant laugh, and sometimes a volley of them, responsive to the jokes of some rustic wit, probably the same person who acted master of the revels at the wake.

Before the coffin was finally closed, Ned Corrigan, whom I had put to flight the preceding night, came up, and repeated the *De profundis* in very strange Latin over the corpse. When this was finished, he got a jug of holy water, and after dipping his thumb in it, first made the sign of the cross upon his own forehead, and afterwards sprinkled

it upon all present, giving my brother and myself an extra compliment, supposing, probably, that we stood most in need of it. When this was over, he sprinkled the corpse and the coffin in particular most profusely. He then placed two pebbles from Lough Derg, and a bit of holy candle, upon the breast of the corpse, and having said a *Pater* and *Ave*, in which he was joined by the people, he closed the lid, and nailed it down.

"Ned," said his brother, "are his feet and toes loose?"

"Musha, but that's more than myself knows," replied Ned. "Are they, Katty?" said he, inquiring from the sister of the deceased.

"Arrah, to be sure, avourneen," answered Katty. "Div you think we would lave him to be tied that-a-way, when he'd be risin' out of his last bed? Wouldn't it be too bad to have his toes tied thin, avourneen?"

The coffin was then brought out and placed upon four chairs before the door to be keened; and, in the meantime, the friends and well-wishers of the deceased were brought into the room to get each a glass of whisky as a token of respect. I observed, also, that such as had not seen any of Kelly's relations until then, came up, and shaking hands with them, said, "I'm sorry for your loss!" This expression of condolence was uniform, and the usual reply was—"Thank you, Mat, or Jim!" with a pluck of the skirts, accompanied by a significant nod to follow. They then got a due share of whisky; and it was curious, after they came out, their faces a little flushed, and their eyes watery with the strong, ardent spirits, to hear with what heartiness and alacrity they entered into Denis's praises.

When he had been keened in the street, there being no hearse, the coffin was placed upon two handspikes which were fixed across, but parallel to each other, under it. These were borne by four men, one at the end of each, with the point of it touching his body a little below his stomach; in other parts of Ireland the coffin is borne on the shoulders, but this is more convenient and less distressing.

When we got out upon the road the funeral was of great extent—for Kelly had been highly respected. On arriving at the *merin* which bounded the land he had owned, the coffin was laid down, and a loud and wailing *keena* took place over it. It was again raised, and the funeral proceeded in a direction which I was surprised to see it take, and it was not until an acquaintance of my brother's had explained the matter that I understood the cause of it. In Ireland, when a murder is perpetrated, it is usual, as the funeral proceeds to the graveyard, to bring the corpse to the house of him who committed the crime, and lay it down at his door, while the relations of the deceased kneel down, and, with an appalling solemnity, utter the deepest imprecations, and invoke the justice of Heaven on the head of the murderer. This, however, is usually omitted if the residence of the criminal be completely out of the line of the funeral, but if it be possible, by any circuit, to approach it, this dark ceremony is never omitted. In cases where the crime is doubtful, or unjustly imputed, those who are thus visited come out, and laying their right hand upon the coffin, protest

their innocence of the blood of the deceased, calling God to witness the truth of their asseverations; but in cases where the crime is clearly proved against the murderer, the door is either closed, the ceremony repelled by violence, or the house abandoned by the inmates until the funeral passes.

The death of Kelly, however, could not be actually, or, at least, directly, considered a murder, for it was probable that Grimes did not inflict the stroke with an intention of taking away his life, and, besides, Kelly survived it four months. Grimes's house was not more than fifteen perches from the road; and when the corpse was opposite the little bridle-way that led up to it, they laid it down for a moment, and the relations of Kelly surrounded it, offering up a short prayer, with uncovered heads. It was then borne towards the house, whilst the keening commenced in a loud and wailing cry, accompanied with clapping of hands, and every other symptom of external sorrow. But, independent of their compliance with this ceremony as an old usage, there is little doubt that the appearance of anything connected with the man who certainly occasioned Kelly's death awoke a keener and more intense sorrow for his loss. The wailing was thus continued until the coffin was laid opposite Grimes's door; nor did it cease then, but, on the contrary, was renewed with louder and more bitter lamentations.

As the multitude stood compassionating the affliction of the widow and orphans, it was the most impressive and solemn spectacle that could be witnessed. The very house seemed to have a condemned look; and, as a single wintry breeze waved a tuft of long grass that grew on a seat of turf at the side of the door, it brought the vanity of human enmity before my mind with melancholy force. When the keening ceased, Kelly's wife, with her children, knelt, their faces towards the house of their enemy, and invoked, in the strong language of excited passion, the justice of Heaven upon the head of the man who had left her a widow, and her children fatherless. I was anxious to know if Grimes would appear to disclaim the intention of murder; but I understood that he was at market—for it happened to be market day.

"Come out!" said the widow—"come out, and look at the sight that's here before you! Come and view *your own work!* Lay but your hand upon the coffin, and the blood of him that you murdhered will spout, before God and these Christhen people, in your guilty face! But, oh! may the Almighty God bring *this home to you!*[1]—May you never lave this life, John Grimes, till worse nor has overtaken me and mine falls upon you and yours! May our curse light upon you this day;—the curse, I say, of the widow and the orphans, and that your bloody hand has made us, may it blast you! May you and all belonging to you wither off the 'arth! Night and day, sleeping and waking—like snow off the ditch may you melt, until your name and your place will be disremimbered, except to be cursed by them that will

[1] Does not this usage illustrate the proverb of the guilt being brought home to a man when there is no doubt of his criminality?

hear of you and your hand of murdher! Amin, we pray God this day!—and the widow and orphan's prayer will not fall to the ground while your guilty head is above? Childher, did you all say it?"

At this moment a deep, terrific murmur, or rather ejaculation, corroborative of assent to this dreadful imprecation, pervaded the crowd in a fearful manner; their countenances darkened, their eyes gleamed, and their scowling visages stiffened into an expression of determined vengeance.

When these awful words were uttered, Grimes's wife and daughters approached the window in tears, sobbing, at the same time, loudly and bitterly.

"You're wrong," said the wife—"you're wrong, Widow Kelly, in saying that my husband *murdhered* him!—he did *not* murdher him; for, when you and yours were far from him, I heard John Grimes declare, before the God who's to judge him, that he had no thought or intention of taking his life; he struck him in anger, and the blow did him an injury that was not intended. Don't curse him, Honor Kelly," said she—"don't curse him so fearfully; but, above all, don't curse me and my innocent chiidher, for *we* never harmed you, nor wished you ill! *But it was this party work did it!* Oh, my God!" she exclaimed, wringing her hands, in utter bitterness of spirit, "when will it be ended between friends and neighbours, that ought to live in love and kindness together, instead of fighting in this bloodthirsty manner!"

She then wept more violently, as did her daughters.

"May God give me mercy in the last day, Mrs. Kelly, as I pity from my heart and soul you and your orphans," she continued; "but don't curse us, for the love of God—for you know we should forgive our enemies, as we ourselves, that are the enemies of God, hope to be forgiven."

"May God forgive me, then, if I have wronged you or your husband," said the widow, softened by their distress; "but you know that, whether he intended his life or not, the stroke he gave him has left my childher without a father, and myself dissolate. Oh, heavens above me!" she exclaimed, in a scream of distraction and despair, "is it possible—is it thrue—that my manly husband, the best father that ever breathed the breath of life, my own Denis, is lying dead—murdhered before my eyes! Put your hands on my head, some of you—put your hands on my head, or it will go to pieces. Where are you, Denis, where are you, the strong of hand, and the tender of heart? Come to me, darling, I want you in my distress. I want comfort, Denis; and I'll take it from none but yourself, for kind was your word to me in all my afflictions!"

All present were affected; and, indeed, it was difficult to say whether Kelly's wife or Grimes's was more to be pitied at the moment. The affliction of the latter and of her daughters was really pitiable: their sobs were loud, and the tears streamed down their cheeks like rain. When the widow's exclamations had ceased, or rather were lost in the loud cry of sorrow which was uttered by the keeners and

friends of the deceased, they, too, standing somewhat apart from the rest, joined in it bitterly; and the solitary wail of Mrs. Grimes, differing in character from that of those who had been trained to modulate the most profound grief into strains of a melancholy nature, was particularly wild and impressive. At all events, her Christian demeanour, joined to the sincerity of her grief, appeased the enmity of many; so true is it that a soft answer turneth away wrath. I could perceive, however, that the resentment of Kelly's male relations did not at all appear to be in any degree moderated.

The funeral again proceeded, and I remarked that whenever a strange passenger happened to meet it he always turned back, and accompanied it for a short distance, after which he resumed his journey, it being considered unlucky to omit this usage on meeting a funeral. Denis's residence was not more than two miles from the churchyard, which was situated in the town where he had received the fatal blow. As soon as we had got on about the half of this way, the priest of the parish met us, and the funeral, after proceeding a few perches more, turned into a green field, in the corner of which stood a table with the apparatus for saying mass spread upon it.

The coffin was then laid down once more, immediately before this temporary altar; and the priest, after having robed himself, the wrong side of the vestments out, as is usual in the case of death, began to celebrate mass for the dead, the congregation all kneeling. When this was finished, the friends of the deceased approached the altar, and after some private conversation, the priest turned round, and inquired aloud:

"Who will give offerings?"

The people were acquainted with the manner in which this matter is conducted, and accordingly knew what to do. When the priest put the question, Denis's brother, who was a wealthy man, came forward, and laid down two guineas on the altar; the priest took this up, and putting it on a plate, set out among the multitude, accompanied by two or three of those who were best acquainted with the inhabitants of the parish. He thus continued putting the question, distinctly, after each man had paid; and according as the money was laid down, those who accompanied the priest pronounced the name of the person who gave it, so that all present might hear it. This is also done to enable the friends of the deceased to know not only those who show them this mark of respect, but those who neglect it, in order that they may treat them in the same manner on similar occasions. The amount of money so received is very great; for there is a kind of emulation among the people, as to who will act with most decency and spirit, that is exceedingly beneficial to the priest. In such instances the difference of religion is judiciously overlooked; for although the prayers of Protestants are declined on those occasions, yet it seems the same objection does not hold good against their money, and accordingly they pay as well as the rest. When the priest came round to where I stood he shook hands with my brother, with whom he appeared to be on very friendly and familiar terms; he and I were then introduced to each other.

"Come," said he, with a very droll expression of countenance, shaking the plate at the same time up near my brother's nose—"come, Mr. D'Arcy, down with your offerings, if you wish to have a friend with St. Peter when you go as far as the gates; down with your money, sir, and you shall be remembered, depend upon it."

"Ah!" said my brother, pulling out a guinea, "I would with the greatest pleasure; but I fear this is not orthodox. I'm afraid it has the heretical mark upon it."

"In that case," replied his reverence, laughing heartily, "your only plan is to return it to the bosom of the Church by laying it on the plate here—it will then be *within the pale*, you know."

This reply produced a good deal of good-humour among that part of the crowd which immediately surrounded them—not excepting his nearest relations, who laughed heartily.

"Well," said my brother, as he laid it on the plate, "how many prayers will you offer up in my favour for this?"

"Leave *that* to myself," said his reverence, looking at the *money*—"it will be before you when you go to St. Peter."

He then held the plate out to me in a droll manner; and I added another guinea to my brother's gift: for which I had the satisfaction of having my name called out so loud that it might be heard a quarter of a mile off.

"God bless you, sir," said the priest, "and I thank you."

"John," said I, when he left us, "I think that is a pleasant and rather a sensible man?"

"He's as jovial a soul," replied my brother, "as ever gave birth to a jest, and he sings a right good song. Many a convivial hour have he and I spent together; but, as to being a Catholic in *their* sense—Lord help you! At all events, he is no bigot; but, on the contrary, a liberal—and, putting religion out of the question, a kind and benevolent man."

When the offerings were all collected he returned to the altar, repeated a few additional prayers in prime style, as rapid as lightning; and after hastily shaking the holy water on the crowd, the funeral moved on. It was now two o'clock, the day clear and frosty, and the sun unusually bright for the season. During mass, many were added to those who formed the funeral train at the outset; so that, when we got out upon the road, the procession appeared very large. After this, few or none joined it; for it is esteemed by no means "*decent*" to do so *after* mass—because, in that case, the matter is ascribed to an evasion of the offerings; but those whose delay has not really been occasioned by this motive make it a point to pay them at the grave-yard, or after the interment, and sometimes even on the following day—so jealous are the peasantry of having any degrading suspicion attached to their generosity.

The order of the funeral now was as follows:—Foremost the women—next to them the corpse, surrounded by the relations—the eldest son, in deep affliction, "led the coffin," as chief mourner, holding in his hand the corner of a sheet or piece of linen, fastened to the *mort-cloth*.

After the coffin came those who were on foot, and in the rear were the equestrians. When we were a quarter of a mile from the churchyard the funeral was met by a dozen of singing boys, belonging to a chapel choir which the priest, who was fond of music, had some time before formed. They fell in, two by two, immediately behind the corpse, and commenced singing the *Requiem*, or Latin hymn for the dead.

The scene through which we passed at this time, though not clothed with the verdure and luxuriant beauty of summer, was, nevertheless, marked by that solemn and decaying splendour which characterises a fine country, lit up by the melancholy light of a winter setting sun. It was, therefore, much more in character with the occasion. Indeed, I felt it altogether beautiful; and as the "dying day-hymn stole aloft," the dim sunbeams fell, through a vista of naked, motionless trees, upon the coffin, which was borne with a slower and more funereal pace than before, in a manner that threw a solemn and visionary light upon the whole procession. This, however, was raised to something dreadfully impressive when the long train, thus proceeding with a motion so mournful, was seen each covered with a profusion of crimson ribbons, to indicate that the corpse they bore owed his death to a deed of murder. The circumstance of the sun glancing his rays upon the coffin was not unobserved by the peasantry, who considered it as a good omen to the spirit of the departed.

As we went up the street which had been the scene of the quarrel that proved so fatal to Kelly, the coffin was again laid down on the spot where he received his death-blow; and, as was usual, the wild and melancholy *keena* was raised. My brother saw many of Grimes's friends among the spectators, but he himself was not visible. Whether Kelly's party saw them or not, we could not say; if they did, they seemed not to notice them, for no expression of revenge or indignation escaped them.

At length we entered the last receptacle of the dead. The coffin was now placed upon the shoulders of the son and brothers of the deceased, and borne round the churchyard; whilst the priest, with his stole upon him, preceded it, reading prayers for the eternal repose of the soul. Being then laid beside the grave, a "*De profundis*" was repeated by the priest and the mass-server; after which a portion of fresh clay, carried from the fields, was brought to his reverence, who read a prayer over it and consecrated it. This is a ceremony which is never omitted at the interment of a Roman Catholic. When it was over, the coffin was lowered into the grave, and the blessed clay shaken over it. The priest now took the shovel in his own hands, and threw in the three first shovelsfull—one in the name of the Father, one in the name of the Son, and one in the name of the Holy Ghost. The sexton then took it, and in a short time Denis Kelly was fixed for ever in his narrow bed.

While these ceremonies were going forward, the churchyard presented a characteristic picture. Beside the usual groups who straggle through the place to amuse themselves by reading the inscriptions on the tombs, you might see many individuals kneeling on particular

graves, where some relation lay, for the benefit of whose soul they offered up their prayers with an attachment and devotion which one cannot but admire. Sometimes all the surviving members of the family would assemble, and repeat a *Rosary* for the same purpose. Again, you might see an unhappy woman beside a newly-made grave, giving way to lamentation and sorrow for the loss of a husband or of some beloved child. Here you might observe the "last bed" ornamented with hoops, decked in white paper, emblematic of the virgin innocence of the individual who slept below; there a little board-cross, informing you that "this monument was erected by a disconsolate husband to the memory of his beloved wife." But that which excited greatest curiosity was a sycamore tree which grew in the middle of the burying-ground.

It is necessary to inform the reader that in Ireland many of the churchyards are exclusively appropriated to the interment of Roman Catholics, and, consequently, no Protestant corpse would be permitted to pollute or desecrate them. This was one of them: but it appears that, by some means or other, the body of a Protestant had been interred in it—and hear the consequence! The next morning heaven marked its disapprobation of this awful visitation by a miracle; for, ere the sun rose from the east, a full-grown sycamore had shot up out of the heretical grave, and stands there to this day, a monument at once of the profanation and its consequence. Crowds were looking at this tree, feeling a kind of awe, mingled with wonder, at the deed which drew down such a visible and lasting mark of God's displeasure. On the tombstones near Kelly's grave men and women were seated, smoking tobacco to their very heart's content; for, with that profusion which characterises the Irish in everything, they had brought out large quantities of tobacco, whisky, and bunches of pipes. On such occasions it is the custom for those who attend the wake or the funeral to bring a full pipe home with them; and it is expected that, as often as it is used, they will remember to say, "God be merciful to the soul of him that this pipe was over."

The crowd, however, now began to disperse; and the immediate friends of the deceased sent the priest, accompanied by Kelly's brother, to request that we would come in, as the last mark of respect to poor Denis's memory, and take a glass of wine and a cake.

"Come, Toby," said my brother, "we may as well go in, as it will gratify them; we need not make much delay, and we will still be at home in sufficient time for dinner."

"Certainly you will," said the priest; "for you shall both come and dine with me to-day."

"With all my heart," said my brother; "I have no objection, for I know you give it good."

When we went in, the punch was already reeking from immense white jugs, that couldn't hold less than a gallon each.

"Now," said his reverence, very properly, "you have had a dacent and creditable funeral, and have managed everything with great propriety; let me request, therefore, that you will not get drunk, nor

permit yourselves to enter into any disputes or quarrels ; but be moderate in what you take, and go home peaceably."

"Why, thin, your reverence," replied the widow, "he's now in his grave, and, thank God, it's he that had the dacent funeral all out—ten good gallons did we put on you, asthore, and it's yourself that liked the dacent thing, anyhow ; but sure, sir, it would shame him where he's lyin' if we disregarded him so far as to go home widout bringing in our friends that didn't desart us in our throuble, and thratin' them for their kindness."

While Kelly's brother was filling out all their glasses, the priest, my brother, and I were taking a little refreshment. When the glasses were filled, the deceased's brother raised his in his hand, and said :

"Well, gintlemen," addressing us, "I hope you'll pardon me for not dhrinking your healths first; but people, you know, can't break through an ould custom, at any rate—so I give poor Denis's health, that's in his *warm* grave, and God be marciful to his sowl."[1]

The priest now winked at me to give them their own way ; so we filled our glasses, and joined with the rest in drinking "Poor Denis's health, that's now in his warm grave, and God be merciful to his soul."

When this was finished, they then drank ours, and thanked us for our kindness in attending the funeral. It was now past five o'clock, and we left them just setting in to a hard bout of drinking, and rode down to his reverence's residence.

"I saw you smile," said he, on our way, "at the blundering toast of Mat Kelly ; but it would be labour in vain to attempt setting them right. What do they know about the distinctions of more refined life? Besides, I maintain that what they said was as well calculated to express their affection as if they had drunk honest Denis's *memory*. It is, at least, unsophisticated. But did you hear," said he, "of the apparition that was seen last night on the mountain road above Denis's?"

"I did not *hear* of it," I replied, equivocating a little.

"Why," said he, "it is currently reported that the spirit of a murdered pedlar, which haunts the hollow of the road at Drumfurrar, chased away the two servant men as they were bringing home the coffin, and that, finding it a good bit, he then got into it, and walked half a mile along the road with the wooden surtout upon him ; and finally that, to wind up the frolic, he left it on one end half-way between the bridge and Denis's house, after putting a crowd of the countrymen to flight. I suspect some droll knave has played them a trick. I assure you that a deputation of them, who declared that they saw the coffin move along of itself, waited upon me this morning to know whether they ought to have him put into the coffin or gotten another."

"Well," said my brother, in reply to him, "after dinner we will probably throw some light upon that circumstance; for I believe my brother here knows something about it."

[1] A fact.

"So, sir," said the priest, "I perceive you have been amusing yourself at their expense."

I seldom spent a pleasanter evening than I did with Father Molloy (so he was called), who was, as my brother said, a shrewd, sensible man, possessed of convivial powers of the first order. He sang us several good songs; and, to do him justice, he had an excellent voice. He regretted very much the state of party and religious feeling, which he did everything in his power to suppress.

"But," said he, "I have little co-operation in my efforts to communicate knowledge to my flock, and implant better feelings among them. You must know," he added, "that I am no great favourite among them. On being appointed to this parish by my bishop, I found that the young man who was curate to my predecessor had formed a party against me, thinking, by that means, eventually to get the parish himself. Accordingly, on coming here, I found the chapel doors closed on me; so that a single individual among them would not recognise me as their proper pastor. By firmness and spirit, however, I at length succeeded, after a long struggle against the influence of the curate, in gaining admission to the altar; and by a proper representation of his conduct to the bishop I soon made my gentleman knock under. Although beginning to gain ground in the good opinion of the people, I am by no means yet a favourite. The curate and I scarcely speak; and a great number of my parishioners brand me with the epithet of the *Orange priest;* and this principally because I occasionally associate with Protestants—a habit, gentlemen, which they will find some difficulty in making me give up as long as I can have the pleasure," said he, bowing, "of seeing such guests at my table as those with whose company I am now honoured."

It was now near nine o'clock, and my brother was beginning to relate an anecdote concerning the clergyman who had preceded Father Molloy in the parish, when a messenger from Mr. Wilson, already alluded to, came up in breathless haste, requesting the priest for God's sake to go down into town instantly, as the Kellys and the Grimeses were engaged in a fresh quarrel.

"My God!" he exclaimed—"when will this work have an end? But, to tell you the truth, gentlemen, I apprehended it; and I fear something still more fatal to the parties will yet be the consequence. Mr. D'Arcy, you must try what you can do with the Grimeses, and I will manage the Kellys."

We then proceeded to the town, which was but a very short distance from the priest's house; and on arriving found a large crowd before the door of the house in which the Kellys had been drinking, engaged in hard conflict. The priest was on foot, and had brought his whip with him, it being an argument, in the hands of a Roman Catholic pastor, which tells so home that it is not to be gainsaid. Mr. Molloy and my brother now dashed in amongst them; and by remonstrance, abuse, blows, and entreaty, they with difficulty succeeded in terminating the fight. They were also assisted by Mr. Wilson and other persons, who dared not, until their appearance, run the risk of interfering between

them. Wilson's servant, who had come for the priest, was still standing beside me looking on ; and while my brother and Mr. Molloy were separating the parties, I asked him how the fray commenced.

"Why, sir," said he, "it bein' market-day, the Grimeses chanced to be in town, and this got to the ears of the Kellys, who were drinking in Cassidy's here till they got tipsy ; some then broke out, and began to go up and down the street, shouting for the face of a murdhering Grimes. The Grimeses, sir, happened at the time to be drinking with a parcel of their friends in Joe Sherlock's, and hearing the Kellys calling out for them, why, as the dhrop, sir, was in on both sides, they were soon at it. Grimes has given one of the Kellys a great bating ; but Tom M'Guigan, Kelly's cousin, a little before we came I'm tould, has knocked the seven senses out of him with the pelt of a brick-bat in the stomach."

Soon after this, however, the quarrel was got under; and, in order to prevent any more bloodshed that night, my brother and I got the Kellys together, and brought them as far as our residence, on their way home. As we went along they uttered awful vows and determinations of the deepest revenge, swearing repeatedly that they would shoot Grimes from behind a ditch, if they could not in any other manner have his blood. They seemed highly intoxicated ; and several of them were cut and abused in a dreadful manner ; even the women were in such a state of excitement and alarm that grief for the deceased was, in many instances, forgotten. Several of both sexes were singing ; some laughing with triumph at the punishment they had inflicted on the enemy ; others of them, softened by what they had drunk, were weeping in tones of sorrow that might be heard a couple of miles off. Among the latter were many of the men, some of whom, as they staggered along, with their frieze big-coats hanging off one shoulder, clapped their hands and roared like bulls, as if they intended, by the loudness of their grief then, to compensate for their silence when sober. It was also quite ludicrous to see the men kissing each other, sometimes in this maudlin sorrow, and at others when exalted into the very madness of mirth. Such as had been cut in the scuffle, on finding the blood trickle down their faces, would wipe it off—then look at it, and break out into a parenthetical volley of curses against the Grimeses ; after which they would resume their grief, hug each other in mutual sorrow, and clap their hands as before. In short, such a group could be seen nowhere but in Ireland.

When my brother and I had separated from them, I asked him what had become of Vengeance, and if he were still in the country.

"No," said he ; "with all his courage and watchfulness, he found that his life was not safe ; he accordingly sold off his property, and collecting all his ready cash, emigrated to America, where, I hear, he is doing well."

"God knows," I replied, "I shouldn't be surprised if one half of the population were to follow his example, for the state of society here among the lower orders is truly deplorable."

TRAITS AND STORIES

OF

THE IRISH PEASANTRY.

SECOND SERIES.

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THE HEDGE SCHOOL.

THERE never was a more unfounded calumny than that which would impute to the Irish peasantry an indifference to education. I may, on the contrary, fearlessly assert that the lower orders of no country ever manifested such a positive inclination for literary acquirements, and that, too, under circumstances strongly calculated to produce carelessness and apathy on this particular subject. Nay, I do maintain that he who is intimately acquainted with the character of our countrymen, must acknowledge that their zeal for book learning not only is strong and ardent, when opportunities of scholastic education occur, but that it increases in proportion as these opportunities are rare and unattainable. The very name and nature of hedge schools are proof of this: for what stronger point could be made out, in illustration of my position, than the fact that, despite of obstacles whose very idea would crush ordinary enterprise—when not even a shed could be obtained in which to assemble the children of an Irish village, the worthy pedagogue selected the first green spot on the sunny side of a quickset-hedge which he conceived adapted for his purpose, and there, under the scorching rays of a summer sun, and in defiance of spies and statutes, carried on the work of instruction. From this circumstance the name of hedge school originated; and, however it may be associated with the ludicrous, I maintain that it is highly creditable to the character of the people and an encouragement to those who wish to see them receive pure and correct educational knowledge. A hedge school, however, in its original sense, was but a temporary establishment, being only adopted until such a schoolhouse could be erected as was in those days deemed sufficient to hold such a number of children as were expected, at all hazards, to attend it.

The opinion, I know, which has been long entertained of hedge schoolmasters was, and still is, unfavourable; but the character of these worthy and eccentric persons has been misunderstood, for the stigma attached to their want of knowledge should have rather been applied to their want of morals, because, on this latter point only, were they indefensible. The fact is that hedge schoolmasters were a class of men from whom morality was not expected by the peasantry; for, strange to say, one of their strongest recommendations to the good opinion of the people, as far as their literary talents and qualifications were concerned, was an inordinate love of whisky, and if to this could be added a slight touch of derangement, the character was complete.

On once asking an Irish peasant why he sent his children to a schoolmaster who was notoriously addicted to spirituous liquors, rather

than to a man of sober habits who taught in the same neighbour hood—

"Why do I sind them to Mat Meegan, is it?" he replied; "and do you think, sir," said he, "that I'd sind them to that dry-headed dunce, Mr. Frazher, with his black coat upon him, and his caroline hat, and him wouldn't taste a glass of poteen wanst in seven years? Mat, sir, likes it, and teaches the boys ten times betther whin he's dhrunk nor when he's sober; and you'll never find a good tacher, sir, but's fond of it. As for Mat, when he's *half gone*, I'd turn him agin the country for deepness in larning; for it's then he rhymes it out of him, that it would do one good to hear him."

"So," said I, "you think that a love of drinking poteen is a sign of talent in a schoolmaster."

"Ay, or in any man else, sir," he replied. "Look at tradesmen, and 'tis always the cleverest that you'll find fond of the dhrink! If you had hard Mat and Frazher the other evening at it—what a hare Mat made of him; but he was just in proper tune for it, being, at the time, purty well, I thank you, and did not lave him a leg to stand upon. He took him in Euclid's Ailments and Logicals, and proved in Frazher's teeth that the candlestick before them was the church-steeple, and Frazher himself the parson; and so sign was on it, the other couldn't disprove it, but had to give in."

"Mat, then," I observed, "is the most learned man on this walk."

"Why, thin, I doubt that same, sir," replied he, "for all he's so great in the books; for, you see, while they were ding dust at it, who comes in but mad Delany, and he attacked Mat, and in less than no time rubbed the consate out of *him*, as clane as *he* did out of Frazher."

"Who is Delany?" I inquired.

"He was the makings of a priest, sir, and was in Maynooth a couple of years, but he took in the knowledge so fast that, bedad, he got *cracked wid larnin'*—for a *dunce*, you see, never cracks wid it, in regard of the thickness of the skull: no doubt but he's too many for Mat, and can go far beyand him in the books; but then, like that, he's still brightest whin he has a sup in his head."

These are prejudices which the Irish peasantry have long entertained concerning the character of hedge schoolmasters; but granting them to be unfounded, as they generally are, yet it is an indisputable fact that hedge schoolmasters were as superior in literary knowledge and acquirements to the class of men who are now engaged in the general education of the people as they were beneath them in moral and religious character. The former part of this assertion will, I am aware, appear rather startling to many. But it is true; and one great cause why the character of society teachers is undervalued, in many instances, by the people proceeds from a conviction on their parts that they are, and must be, incapable, from the slender portion of learning they have received, of giving their children a sound and practical education.

But that we may put this subject in a clearer light, we will give a

sketch of the course of instruction which was deemed necessary for a hedge schoolmaster, and let it be contrasted with that which falls to the lot of those engaged in the conducting of schools patronised by the Education Societies of the present day.

When a poor man, about twenty or thirty years ago, understood from the schoolmaster who educated his sons that any of them was particularly "cute at his larnin'," the ambition of the parent usually directed itself to one of three objects—he would eithe. make him a priest, a clerk, or a schoolmaster. The determination once fixed, the boy was set apart from every kind of labour, that he might be at liberty to bestow his undivided time and talents on the objects set before him. His parents strained every nerve to furnish him with the necessary books, and always took care that his appearance and dress should be more decent than those of any other member of the family. If the Church were in prospect, he was distinguished, after he had been two or three years at his Latin, by the appellation of "the young priest," an epithet to him of the greatest pride and honour; but if destined only to wield the ferula, his importance in the family and the narrow circle of his friends was by no means so great. If, however, the goal of his future ambition as a schoolmaster was humbler, that of his literary career was considerably extended. He usually remained at the next school in the vicinity until he supposed that he had completely drained the master of all his knowledge. This circumstance was generally discovered in the following manner:—As soon as he judged himself a match for his teacher, and possessed sufficient confidence in his own powers, he penned him a formal challenge to meet him in literary contest, either in his own school, before competent witnesses, or at the chapel-green, on the Sabbath day, before the arrival of the priest, or probably after it—for the priest himself was generally the moderator and judge upon these occasions. This challenge was generally couched in rhyme, and either sent by the hands of a common friend, or posted upon the chapel door.

These contests, as the reader perceives, were always public, and were witnessed by the peasantry with intense interest. If the master sustained a defeat, it was not so much attributed to his want of learning as to the overwhelming talent of his opponent; nor was the success of the pupil generally followed by the expulsion of the master—for this was but the first of a series of challenges which the former proposed to undertake, ere he eventually settled himself in the exercise of his profession.

I remember being present at one of them, and a ludicrous exhibition it was. The parish priest, a red-faced, jocular little man, was president, and his curate, a scholar of six feet two inches in height, and a schoolmaster from the next parish were judges. I will only touch upon two circumstances in their conduct which evinced a close instinctive knowledge of human nature in the combatants. The master would not condescend to argue off his throne—a piece of policy to which, in my opinion, he owed his victory (for he won): whereas the pupil insisted that he should meet him on equal ground, face to face, in the

lower end of the room. It was evident that the latter could not divest himself of his boyish terrors as long as the other sat, as it were, in the plenitude of his former authority, contracting his brows with habitual sternness, thundering out his arguments with a most menacing and stentorian voice, while he thumped his desk with his shut fist, or struck it with his great rule at the end of each argument, in a manner that made the youngster put his hands behind him several times, to be certain that that portion of his dress which is *unmentionable* was tight upon him.

If in these encounters the young candidate for the honours of the literary sceptre was not victorious, he again resumed his studies under his old preceptor with renewed vigour and becoming humility; but if he put the schoolmaster down, his next object was to seek out some other teacher, whose celebrity was unclouded within his own range. With him he had a fresh encounter, and its result was similar to what I have already related. If victorious, he sought out another and more learned opponent; and if defeated, he became the pupil of his conqueror—going night-about, during his sojourn at the school, with the neighbouring farmers' sons, whom he assisted in their studies as a compensation for his support. He was called, during these peregrinations, the *Poor Scholar*, a character which secured him the esteem and hospitable attention of the peasantry, who never fail in respect to any one characterised by a zeal for learning and knowledge.

In this manner he proceeded, a literary knight-errant, filled with a chivalrous love of letters which would have done honour to the most learned peripatetic of them all; enlarging his own powers, and making fresh acquisitions of knowledge as he went along. His contests, his defeats, and his triumphs, of course, were frequent; and his habits of thinking and reasoning must have been considerably improved, his acquaintance with classical and mathematical authors rendered more intimate, and his powers of illustration and comparison more clear and happy. After three or four years spent in this manner, he usually returned to his native place, sent another challenge to the schoolmaster, in the capacity of a candidate for his situation, and, if successful, drove him out of the district, and established himself in his situation. The vanquished master sought a new district, sent a new challenge, in his turn, to some other teacher, and usually put him to flight in the same manner. The terms of defeat or victory, according to their application, were called *sacking* and *bogging*.

"There was a great argument entirely, sir," said a peasant once, when speaking of these contests; "'twas at the chapel on Sunday week, betune young Tom Brady, that was a poor scholar in Munsther, and Mr. Hartigan, the schoolmaster."

"And who was victorious?" I inquired.

"Why, sir, and maybe 'twas young Brady that didn't *sack* him clane, before the priest and all, and went nigh to *bog* the priest himself in Greek. His reverence was only two words beyant him; but he sacked the masther, anyhow, and showed him in the Grammatical and Dixonary where he was wrong."

"And what is Brady's object in life?" I asked. "What does he intend to do?"

"Intend to do, is it? I'm tould nothing less nor going into Thrinity College in Dublin, and expects to bate them all there, out and out: he's first to make something they call a seizure;[1] and, afther making that good, he's to be a counsellor. So, sir, you see what it is to resave good schoolin' and to have the larnin'; but, indeed, it's Brady that's the great head-piece entirely."

Unquestionably many who received instruction in this manner have distinguished themselves in the Dublin University; and I have no hesitation in saying that young men educated in Irish hedge schools, as they were called, have proved themselves to be better classical scholars and mathematicians, generally speaking, than any proportionate number of those educated in our first-rate academies. The Munster masters have long been, and still are, particularly celebrated for making excellent classical and mathematical scholars.

That a great deal of ludicrous pedantry generally accompanied this knowledge is not at all surprising, when we consider the rank these worthy teachers held in life, and the stretch of inflation at which their pride was kept by the profound reverence excited by their learning among the people. It is equally true that each of them had a stock of *crambos* ready for accidental encounter which would have puzzled Euclid or Sir Isaac Newton himself; but even these trained their minds to habits of acuteness and investigation. When a schoolmaster of this class had established himself as a good mathematician, the predominant enjoyment of his heart and life was to write the epithet *Philomath* after his name; and this, whatever document he subscribed, was never omitted. If he witnessed a will, it was Timothy Fagan, Philomath; if he put his name to a promissory note, it was Tim. Fagan, Philomath; if he addressed a love-letter to his sweetheart, it was still Timothy Fagan—or whatever the name might be—Philomath; and this was always written in legible and distinct copyhand, sufficiently large to attract the observation of the reader.

It was also usual for a man who had been a pre-eminent and extraordinary scholar to have the epithet GREAT prefixed to his name. I remember one of this description, who was called the *Great O'Brien, par excellence*. In the latter years of his life he gave up teaching, and led a circulating life, going round from school to school, and remaining a week or a month alternately among his brethren. His visits were considered an honour, and raised considerably the literary character of those with whom he resided; for he spoke of dunces with the most dignified contempt, and the general impression was that he would scorn even to avail himself of their hospitality. Like most of his brethren, he could not live without the *poteen;* and his custom was to drink a pint of it in its native purity before he entered into any literary contest, or made any display of his learning at wakes or other Irish festivities; and most certainly, however blameable the practice, and

[1] Sizar.

injurious to health and morals, it threw out his talents and his powers in a most surprising manner.

It was highly amusing to observe the peculiarity which the consciousness of superior knowledge impressed upon the conversation and personal appearance of this decaying race. Whatever might have been the original conformation of their physical structure, it was sure, by the force of acquired habit, to transform itself into a stiff, erect, consequential, and unbending manner, ludicrously characteristic of an inflated sense of their extraordinary knowledge, and a proud and commiserating contempt of the dark ignorance by which, in despite of their own light, they were surrounded. Their conversation, like their own *crambos*, was dark and difficult to be understood; their words truly sesquipedalian; their voice loud and commanding in its tones; their deportment grave and dictatorial, but completely indescribable, and certainly original to the last degree, in those instances where the ready blundering but genuine humour of their country maintained an unyielding rivalry in their disposition against the natural solemnity which was considered necessary to keep up the due dignity of their character.

In many of these persons, where the original humour and gaiety of the disposition were known, all efforts at the grave and dignified were complete failures, and these were enjoyed by the peasantry and their own pupils nearly with the sensations which the enactment of Hamlet by Liston would necessarily produce. At all events, their education, allowing for the usual exceptions, was by no means superficial; and the reader has already received a sketch of the trials which they had to undergo before they considered themselves qualified to enter upon the duties of their calling. Their life was, in fact, a state of literary warfare; and they felt that a mere elementary knowledge of their business would have been insufficient to carry them, with suitable credit, through the attacks to which they were exposed from travelling teachers, whose mode of establishing themselves in schools was, as I said, by driving away the less qualified and usurping their places. This, according to the law of opinion and the custom which prevailed, was very easily effected, for the peasantry uniformly encouraged those whom they supposed to be the most competent; as to moral or religious instruction, neither was expected from them, so that the indifference of the moral character was no bar to their success.

The village of Findramore was situated at the foot of a long green hill, the outline of which formed a low arch, as it rose to the eye against the horizon. This hill was studded with clumps of beeches, and sometimes enclosed as a meadow. In the month of July, when the grass on it was long, many an hour have I spent in solitary enjoyment, watching the wavy motion produced upon its pliant surface by the sunny winds, or the flight of the cloud-shadows, like gigantic phantoms, as they swept rapidly over it, whilst the murmur of the

rocking trees, and the glancing of their bright leaves in the sun, produced a heartfelt pleasure, the very memory of which rises in my imagination like some fading recollection of a brighter world.

At the foot of this hill ran a clear, deep-banked river, bounded on one side by a slip of rich, level meadow, and on the other by a kind of common for the village geese, whose white feathers, during the summer season, lay scattered over its green surface. It was also the playground for the boys of the village school; for there ran that part of the river which, with very correct judgment, the urchins had selected as their bathing place. A little slope or watering-ground in the bank brought them to the edge of the stream, where the bottom fell away into the fearful depths of the whirlpool under the hanging oak on the other bank. Well do I remember the first time I ventured to swim across it, and even yet do I see, in imagination, the two bunches of water flaggons on which the inexperienced swimmers trusted themselves in the water.

About two hundred yards above this the *boreen*[1] which led from the village to the main road crossed the river by one of those old narrow bridges whose arches rise like round ditches across the road—an almost impassible barrier to horse and car. On passing the bridge, in a northern direction, you found a range of low thatched houses on each side of the road; and if one o'clock, the hour of dinner, drew near, you might observe columns of blue smoke curling up from a row of chimneys, some made of wicker creels plastered over with a rich coat of mud; some of old, narrow, bottomless tubs; and others, with a greater appearance of taste, ornamented with thick circular ropes of straw, sewed together like bees' skeps with the peel of a brier; and many having nothing but the open vent above. But the smoke by no means escaped by its legitimate aperture, for you might observe little clouds of it bursting out of the doors and windows; the panes of the latter, being mostly stopped at other times with old hats and rags, were now left entirely open for the purpose of giving it a free escape.

Before the doors, on right and left, was a series of dunghills, each with its concomitant sink of green, rotten water; and if it happened that a stout-looking woman, with watery eyes, and a yellow cap hung loosely upon her matted locks, came, with a chubby urchin on one arm and a pot of dirty water in her hand, its unceremonious ejection into the aforesaid sink would be apt to send you up the village with your finger and thumb (for what purpose you would yourself perfectly understand) closely, but not knowingly, applied to your nostrils. But, independently of this, you would be apt to have other reasons for giving your horse, whose heels are by this time surrounded by a dozen of barking curs, and the same number of shouting urchins, a pretty sharp touch of the spurs, as well as for complaining bitterly of the odour of the atmosphere. It is no landscape without figures; and you might notice, if you are, as I suppose you to be, a man of observation, in

[1] A little road

every sink as you pass along, a "slip of a pig," stretched in the middle of the mud, the very *beau ideal* of luxury, giving occasionally a long, luxuriant grunt, highly expressive of his enjoyment; or, perhaps, an old farrower, lying in indolent repose, with half a dozen young ones jostling each other for their draught, and punching her belly with their little snouts, reckless of the fumes they are creating; whilst the loud crow of the cock, as he confidently flaps his wings on his own dunghill, gives the warning note for the hour of dinner.

As you advance, you will also perceive several faces thrust out of the doors, and rather than miss a sight of you, a grotesque visage peeping by a short cut through the paneless windows—or a tattered female flying to snatch up her urchin that has been tumbling itself, heels up, in the dust of the road, lest "the gintleman's horse might ride over it;" and if you happen to look behind, you may observe a shaggy-headed youth in tattered frieze, with one hand thrust indolently in his breast, standing at the door in conversation with the inmates, a broad grin of sarcastic ridicule on his face, in the act of breaking a joke or two upon yourself or your horse; or perhaps your jaw may be saluted with a lump of clay, just hard enough not to fall asunder as it flies, cast by some ragged gorsoon from behind a hedge, who squats himself in a ridge of corn to avoid detection.

Seated upon a hob at the door, you may observe a toilworn man, without coat or waistcoat; his red, muscular, sun-burnt shoulder peering through the remnant of a shirt, mending his shoes with a piece of twisted flax, called a *lingel*—or, perhaps, sewing two footless stockings (*or martyeens*) to his coat, as a substitute for sleeves.

In the gardens, which are usually fringed with nettles, you will see a solitary labourer, working with that carelessness and apathy that characterise an Irishman when he labours *for himself*—leaning upon his spade to look after you, and glad of any excuse to be idle.

The houses, however, are not all such as I have described—far from it. You see, here and there, between the more humble cabins, a stout, comfortable-looking farm-house, with ornamental thatching, and well-glazed windows; adjoining to which is a hagyard, with five or six large stacks of corn, well trimmed and roped, and a fine, yellow, weather-beaten old hayrick, half cut—not taking into account twelve or thirteen circular strata of stones, that mark out the foundations on which others had been raised. Neither is the rich smell of oaten or wheaten bread, which the good wife is baking on the griddle, unpleasant to your nostrils; nor would the bubbling of a large pot, in which you might see, should you chance to enter, a prodigious square of fat, yellow, and almost transparent bacon tumbling about, be an unpleasant object; truly, as it hangs over a large fire, with well-swept hearthstone, it is in good keeping with the white settle and chairs, and the dresser with noggins, wooden trenchers, and pewter dishes perfectly clean, and as well polished as a French courtier.

As you leave the village, you have, to the left, a view of the hill which I have already described, and to the right a level expanse of

fertile country, bounded by a good view of respectable mountains, peering decently into the sky; and in a line that forms an acute angle from the point of the road where you ride is a delightful valley, in the bottom of which shines a pretty lake; and a little beyond, on the slope of a green hill, rises a splendid house, surrounded by a park, well-wooded and stocked with deer. You have now topped the little hill above the village, and a straight line of level road, a mile long, goes forward to a country town which lies immediately behind that white church, with its spire cutting into the sky, before you. You descend on the other side, and, having advanced a few perches, look to the left, where you see a long thatched chapel, only distinguished from a dwelling-house by its want of chimneys, and a small stone cross that stands on the top of the eastern gable; behind it is a graveyard, and beside it a snug public-house, well whitewashed; then, to the right, you observe a door apparently in the side of a clay bank, which rises considerably above the pavement of the road. What! you ask yourself, can this be a human habitation?—but ere you have time to answer the question, a confused buzz of voices from within reaches your ear, and the appearance of a little "gorsoon," with a red, close-cropped head and Milesian face, having in his hand a short white stick, or the thigh bone of a horse, which you at once recognise as "the pass" of a village school, gives you the full information. He has an ink-horn, covered with leather, dangling at the buttonhole (for he has long since played away the buttons) of his frieze jacket—his mouth is circumscribed with a streak of ink—his pen is stuck knowingly behind his ear—his shins are dotted over with blisters, black, red, and blue—on each heel a kibe—his "leather crackers," videlicet—breeches, shrunk up upon him, and only reaching as far down as the caps of his knees. Having spied you, he places his hand over his brows, to throw back the dazzling light of the sun, and peers at you from under it, till he breaks out into a laugh, exclaiming, half to himself, and half to you:

"You a gintleman!—no, nor one of your breed never was, you procthorin' thief you!"

You are now immediately opposite the door of the seminary, when half a dozen of those seated next it notice you.

"Oh, sir, here's a gintleman on a horse!—masther, sir, here's a gintleman on a horse, wid boots and spurs on him, that's looking in at us."

"Silence!" exclaims the masther; "back from the door, boys, rehearse; everyone of you rehearse, I say, you Bœotians, till the gintleman goes past!"

"I want to go out, if you plase, sir."

"No, you don't, Phelim."

"I do, indeed, sir."

"What! is it afther conthradictin' me you'd be?—don't you see the porter's' out, and you can't go."

"Well, 'tis Mat Meehan has it, sir, and he's out this half hour, sir. I can't stay in, sir—iphfff—iphfff!"

"You want to be idling your time looking at the gintleman. Phelim."

"No indeed, sir—iphfff!"

"Phelim, I know you of ould—go to your sate—I tell you, Phelim, you were born for the encouragement of the hemp manufacture, and you'll die promoting it."

In the meantime, the master puts his head out of the door, his body stooped to a "half bend"—a phrase, and the exact curve which it forms, I leave for the present to your own sagacity—and surveys you until you pass. That is an Irish hedge school, and the personage who follows you with his eye a hedge schoolmaster. His name is Matthew Kavanagh; and as you seem to consider his literary establishment rather a curiosity in its kind, I will, if you be disposed to hear it, give you the history of him and his establishment, beginning, in the first place, with—

THE ABDUCTION OF MAT KAVANAGH,

The Hedge Schoolmaster.

For about three years before the period of which I write, the village of Findramore and the parish in which it lay were without a teacher. Mat's predecessor was a James Garraghty, a lame young man, the son of a widow, whose husband lost his life in attempting to extinguish a fire that broke out in the dwelling-house of Squire Johnston, a neighbouring magistrate. The son was a boy at the time of this disaster, and the Squire, as some compensation for the loss of his father's life in his service, had him educated at his own expense; that is to say, he gave the master who taught in the village orders to educate him gratuitously, on the condition of being horsewhipped out of the parish if he refused. As soon as he considered himself qualified to teach, he opened a school in the village on his own account, where he taught until his death, which happened in less than a year after the commencement of his little seminary. The children usually assembled in his mother's cabin; but as she did not long survive the son, this, which was at best a very miserable residence, soon tottered to the ground. The roof and thatch were burned for firing, the mud gables fell in, and were overgrown with grass, nettles, and docks; and nothing remained but a foot or two of the little clay side-walls, which presented, when associated with the calamitous fate of their inoffensive inmates, rather a touching image of ruin upon a small scale.

Garraghty had been attentive to his little pupils, and his instructions were sufficient to give them a relish for education—a circumstance which did not escape the observation of their parents, who duly appreciated it. His death, however, deprived them of this advantage; and as schoolmasters, under the old system, were always at a premium, it so happened that for three years afterwards none of that class presented himself to their acceptance. Many a trial had been

made, and many a sly offer held out, as a lure to the neighbouring teachers, but they did not take ; for although the country was densely inhabited, yet it was remarked that no schoolmaster ever "*thruv*" in the neighbourhood of Findramore. The place, in fact, had got a bad name. Garraghty died, it was thought, of poverty, a disease to which the Findramore schoolmasters had been always known to be subject. His predecessor, too, was hanged, along with two others, for burning the house of an "Aagint."

Then the Findramore boys were not easily dealt with, having an ugly habit of involving their unlucky teachers in those quarrels which they kept up with the Ballyscanlan boys, a fighting clan that lived at the foot of the mountains above them. These two factions, when they met, whether at fair or market, wake or wedding, could never part without carrying home on each side a dozen or two of bloody cockscombs. For these reasons, the parish of Aughindrum had for a few years been afflicted with an extraordinary dearth of knowledge ; the only literary establishment which flourished in it being a parochial institution, which, however excellent in design, yet, like too many establishments of the same nature, degenerated into a source of knowledge, morals, and education exceedingly dry and unproductive to every person except the master, who was enabled by his honest industry to make a provision for his family absolutely surprising, when we consider the moderate nature of his ostensible income. It was, in fact, like a well dried up, to which scarcely anyone ever thinks of going for water.

Such a state of things, however, could not last long. The youth of Findramore were parched for want of the dew of knowledge : and their parents and grown brethren met one Saturday evening in Barny Brady's shebeen-house to take into consideration the best means for procuring a resident schoolmaster for the village and neighbourhood. It was a difficult point, and required great dexterity of management to enable them to devise any effectual remedy for the evil which they felt. There were present at this council, Tim Dolan, the senior of the village, and his three sons, Jem Coogan, Brian Murphy, Paddy Delany, Owen Roe O'Neil, Jack Traynor, and Andy Connell, with five or six others, whom it is not necessary to enumerate.

"Bring us in a quart, Barny," said Dolan to Brady, who on this occasion we must designate as the host, "and let it be rale hathen."

"What do you mane, Tim ?" replied the host.

"I mane," continued Dolan, "stuff that was never christened, man alive."

"Thin I'll bring you the same that Father Maguire got last night on his way home, afther anointin' ould Katty Duffy," replied Brady. "I'm sure, wnatever I might be afther givin' to strangers, Tim, I'd be long sorry to give *yees* anything but the right sort."

"That's a gay man, Barny," said Traynor ; "but off wid you like shot, an' let us get it under our tooth first, an' then we'll tell you more

about it.—A big rogue is the same Barny," he added, after Brady had gone to bring in the poteen, "an' never sells a droph that's not one whisky and five wathers."

"But he couldn't expose it on *you*, Jack," observed Connell, "you're too ould a hand about the *pot* for that. Warn't you in the mountains last week?"

"Ay: but the curse of Cromwell upon the thief of a gauger, Simpson—himself and a pack o' redcoats surrounded us when we war beginnin' to *double*, and the purtiest *runnin'* that even you seen was lost; for, you see, before you could cross yourself, we had the bottoms knocked clane out of the vessels; so that the villains didn't get a hole in our coats, as they thought they would."

"I tell you," observed O'Neil, "there's a *bad pill* somewhere about us."

"Ay is there, Owen," replied Traynor; "and what is more, I don't think he's a hundhred miles from the place where we're sittin' in."

"Faith, maybe so, Jack," returned the other.

"I'd never give into that," said Murphy. "'Tis Barny Brady that would never turn informer—the same thing isn't in him, nor in any of his breed; there's not a man in the parish I'd thrust sooner."

"I'd jist thrust him," replied Traynor, "as far as I could throw a cow by the tail. Arrah, what's the rason that the gauger never looks next or near *his* place, an' it's well known that he sells poteen widout a license, though he goes past his door wanst a week?"

"What the h—— is keepin' him at all?" inquired one of Dolan's sons.

"Look at him," said Traynor, "comin' in out of the garden: how much afeard he is! keepin' the whisky in a phatie ridge—an' I'd kiss the book that he brought that bottle out in his pocket, instead of diggin' it up out o' the garden."

Whatever Brady's usual habits of *christening* his poteen might have been, that which he now placed before them was good. He laid the bottle on a little deal table with cross legs, and along with it a small drinking glass fixed in a bit of flat circular wood, as a substitute for the original bottom, which had been broken. They now entered upon the point in question without further delay.

"Come, Tim," said Coogan, "you're the oldest man, and must spake first."

"Throth, man," replied Dolan, "beggin' your pardon, I'll dhrink first—*shud-urth*, your sowl; success, boys—glory to ourselves, and confusion to the Scanlan boys, any way."

"And maybe," observed Connell, "'tis we that didn't lick them well in the last fair—they're not able to meet the Findramore birds even on their own walk."

"Well, boys," said Delany, "about the masther? Our childhre will grow up like *bullockeens*, widout knowing a hap'orth; and larning, you see, is a burdyen that's asy carried."

"Ay," observed O'Neil, "as Solvester Maguire, the poet, used to say :—

> "Labour for larnin' before you grow ould,
> For larning is better nor riches nor gould;
> Riches an' gould they may vanquish away,
> But larnin' alone it will never decay.'"

"Success, Owen! Why, you might put down the pot and warm an air to it," said Murphy.

"Well, boys, are we all safe?" asked Traynor,

"Safe!" said old Dolan. "Arrah, what are you talkin' about? Sure, 'tisn't of that same spalpeen of a gangerr that we'd be afraid?"

During this observation, young Dolan pressed Traynor's foot under the table, and they both went out for about five minutes.

"Father," said the son, when he and Traynor re-entered the room, "you're a-wanting home."

"Who wants me, Larry, avick?" says the father.

The son immediately whispered him for a moment, when the old man instantly rose, got his hat, and after drinking another bumper of the poteen, departed.

"'Twas hardly worth while," said Delany; "the ould fellow's mettle to the backbone, an' would never show the *garran-bane* at any rate, even if he knew all about it."

"Bad end to the syllable I'd let the same ould cock hear," said the son; "the divil thrust any man that didn't *switch the primer* [1] for it, though he *is* my father; but now, boys, that the coast's clear, and all safe—where will we get a schoolmaster? Mat Kavanagh won't budge from the Scanlan boys, even if we war to put our hands undher his feet: and small blame to him, when he heads them—sure, you would not expect him to be a thraitor to his own?"

"Faith, the gorsoons is in a bad state," said Murphy, "but, boys, where will we get a man that's *up?* Why, I know 'tis betther to have anybody nor be without one; but we might kill two birds wid one stone—if we could get a masther that would carry 'Articles,' [2] an' swear in the boys, from time to time—an' between ourselves, if there's any danger of the hemp, we may as well lay it upon strange shoulders."

"Ay, but since Corrigan swung for the Aagint," replied Delany, "they're a little modest in havin' act or part wid us; but the best plan is to get an advartisment wrote out, an' have it posted on the chapel door."

This hint was debated with much earnestness; but as they were really anxious to have a master—in the first place, for the simple purpose of educating their children; and in the next, for filling the situation of director and regulator of their illegal Ribbon meetings—they determined on penning an advertisement, according to the suggestion of Delany. After drinking another bottle, and amusing themselves

[1] Take an oath

[2] A copy of the Whiteboy oath and regulations

with some further chat, one of the Dolans undertook to draw up the advertisement, which ran as follows :—

"*ADVARTAAISMENT.*

"*Notes to Schoolmasthers, and to all others whom it may consarn.*

"WANTED,

"For the nabourhood and vircinity of the Townland of Findramore, in the Parish of Aughindrum, in the Barony of Lisnamoghry, County of Sligo, Province of Connaught, Ireland.

"TO SCHOOLMASTERS.

"Take Notes—That any Schoolmaster who understands Spellin' gramatically—Readin' and Writin', in the raal way, according to the Dixonary—Arithmatick, that is to say, the five common rules, namely, simple addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division—and addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, of Dives's denominations. Also reduction up and down—cross multiplication of coin—the Rule of Three direck—the Rule of Three in verse—the double Rule of Three—Frackshins taught according to the vulgar and decimatin' method; and must be well practised to tache the Findramore boys how to manage the *Scuffle*.

"N.B. He must be well grounded in *that*. Practis, Discount, and *Rebatin'*. N.B. Must be well grounded in *that* also.

"Tret and Tare—Fellowship—Allegation—Barther—Rates per Scent—Intherest—Exchange—Prophet in Loss—the Square Root—the Kibe Root—Hippothenuse—Arithmatical and Gommetrical Purgation—Compound Intherest—Loggerheadism—Questions for Exercise, and the Conendix to Algibbra. He must also know Jommithry accordin' to Grunther's scale—the Castigation of the Klipsticks—Surveying and the use of the Jacob-staff.

"N.B. Would get a good dale of Surveyin' to do in the vircinity of Findramore, particularly in *Con-acre time*. If he knew the use of the globe, it would be an accusation. He must also understand the Three Sets of Book-keeping, by single and double entry, particularly Loftus and Company of Paris, their Account of Cash and Company. And above all things, he must know how to tache the *Sarvin' of Mass in Latin*, and be able to read Doctor Gallaher's Irish Sarmints, and explain Kolumkill's and Pastorini's Prophecies.

"N.B. If he understands *Cudgel-fencin'*, it would be an accusation also—but mustn't tache us wid a staff that bends in the middle, bekase it breaks one's head across the guard. Any schoolmaster capacious and collified to instruct in the above-mintioned branches, would get a good school in the townland Findramore and its vircinity, be well fed, an' get the hoith o' good livin' among the farmers, an' would be ped—

"For Book-keepin', the three sets, *a ginny and a half*.

"For Gommethry, &c., *half-a-ginny a quarther*.

"Arithmatic, *aight and three-hapuns*.

"Readin', Writin', &c., *six Hogs*,

"*Given under our hands, this 32nd of June*, 18004.

"LARRY DOLAN.
"DICK DOLAN, his × mark.
"JEM COOGAN, his × mark.
"BRINE MURPHEY.
"PADDY DELANY, his × mark.
"JACK TRAYNOR.
"ANDY CONNELL.
"OWEN ROE O'NEIL, his × mark.

"N.B. *By making airly application to any of the undher-mintioned he will hear of further particklers;* and if they find that he will shoot them, he may expect the best o' thratement, an' be well fed among the farmers.

"N.B. Would get also a good night-school among the vircinity."

Having penned the above advertisement, it was carefully posted early the next morning on the chapel doors, with an expectation on the part of the patrons that it would not be wholly fruitless. The next week, however, passed without an application—the second also—and the third produced the same result; nor was there the slightest prospect of a schoolmaster being blown by any wind to the lovers of learning at Findramore. In the mean time, the Ballyscanlan boys took care to keep up the ill-natured prejudice which had been circulated concerning the fatality that uniformly attended such schoolmasters as settled there; and when this came to the ears of the Findramore folk, it was once more resolved that the advertisement should be again put up, with a clause containing an explanation on that point. The clause ran as follows:—

"N.B. The two last masters that was hanged out of Findramore, that is, Mickey Corrigan, who was hanged for killing the Aagent, and Jem Garraghty, that died of a declension—Jem died in quensequence of ill health, and Mickey was hanged contrary to his own wishes: so that it wasn't either of their faults—as witness our hands this 27th of July.

"DICK DOLAN, his × mark."

This explanation, however, was as fruitless as the original advertisment; and week after week passed over without an offer from a single candidate. The "vircinity" of Findramore and its "nabourhood" seemed devoted to ignorance; and nothing remained except another effort at procuring a master by some more ingenious contrivance.

Debate after debate was consequently held in Barny Brady's; and, until a fresh suggestion was made by Delany, the prospect seemed as bad as ever. Delany, at length, fell upon a new plan; and it must be confessed that it was marked in a peculiar manner by a spirit of originality and enterprise—it being nothing less than a proposal to carry off, by force or stratagem, Mat Kavanagh, who was at that time fixed in the throne of literature among the Ballyscanlan boys, quite unconscious of the honourable translation to the neighbourhood of

Findramore which was intended for him. The project, when broached, was certainly a startling one, and drove most of them to a pause, before they were sufficiently collected to give an opinion on its merits.

"Nothin', boys, is asier," said Delany. "There's to be a patthern in Ballymagowan on next Sathurday—an' that's jist half way betune ourselves and the Scanlan boys. Let us musther an' go there, anyhow. We can keep an eye on Mat widout much trouble, an', when opportunity sarves, nick him at wanst, an' off wid him clane."

"But," said Traynor, "what would we do wid him when he'd be here? Wouldn't he *cut an' run* the first opportunity?"

"How can he, ye omadhawn, if we put a manwill in our pocket, an' sware him? But we'll butther him up when he's among us; or, be me sowks, if it goes to that, force him either to settle wid ourselves, or make himself scarce in the counthry entirely."

"Divil a much force it'll take to keep him, I'm thinkin'," observed Murphy. "He'll have three times a betther school here; and if he was wanst settled, I'll engage he would take to it kindly."

"See here, boys," says Dick Dolan, in a whisper, "if that bloody villain, Brady, isn't afther standin' this quarter of an hour, strivin' to hear what we're about; but it's well we didn't bring up anything consarnin' the other business; didn't I tell yees the desate was in 'im? Look at his shadow on the wall forninst us."

"Hould yer tongues, boys," said Traynor; "jist keep never mindin', and, be my sowks, I'll make him sup sorrow for that thrick."

"You had betther neither make nor meddle with him," observed Delany; "jist put him out o' that—but don't raise yer hand to him, or he'll sarve you as he did Jem Flanagan—put ye three or four months in the *Stone Jug*."

Traynor, however, had gone out while he was speaking, and in a few minutes dragged in Brady, whom he caught in the very act of eavesdropping.

"Jist come in, Brady," said Traynor, as he dragged him along—"walk in, man alive; sure, and sich an honest man as you are needn't be afeard of lookin' his friend in the face!—ho!—an' by sowl, is it a spy we've got? and, I suppose, would be an informer, too, if he had heard anything to tell!"

"What's the manin' of this, boys?" exclaimed the others, feigning ignorance—"let the honest man go, Traynor. What do ye hawl him that-a-way for, ye gallis pet?"

"Honest!" replied Traynor—"how very honest he is, the desavin villain—to be standin' at the windy there, wantin' to overhear the little harmless talk we had."

"Come, Traynor," said Brady, seizing him in his turn by the neck, "take your hands off of me, or, bad fate to me, but I'll lave ye a mark."

Traynor, in his turn, had his hand twisted in Brady's cravat, which he drew tightly about his neck, until the other got nearly black in the face.

"Let me go, you villain!" exclaimed Brady, "or by this blessed night that's in it, it'll be worse for you."

"Villain! is it?" replied Traynor, making a blow at him, whilst Brady snatched at a penknife which one of the others had placed on the table, after picking the tobacco out of his pipe—intending either to stab Traynor or to cut the knot of the cravat by which he was held. The others, however, interfered, and prevented further mischief.

"Brady," said Traynor, "you'll rue this night, if ever a man did, you treacherous informin' villain. What an honest spy we have among us!—and a short course to you!"

"Oh, hould yer tongue, Traynor!" replied Brady: "I blieve it's best known who is both the spy and the informer. The divil a pint of poteen ever you'll run in this parish until you clear yourself of bringing the gauger on the Traceys, bekase they tuck Mick M'Kew in preference to yourself to run it for them."

Traynor made another attempt to strike him, but was prevented. The rest now interfered; and, in the course of an hour or so, an adjustment took place.

Brady took up the tongs, and swore "by that blessed iron" that he neither heard nor intended to hear anything they said, and this exculpation was followed by a fresh bottle at his own expense.

"You omadhawn," said he to Traynor, "I was ony puttin' up a dozen o' bottles into the tatch of the house, when you thought I was listenin';" and, as a proof of the truth of this, he brought them out and showed them some bottles of poteen, neatly covered up under the thatch.

Before their separation they finally planned the abduction of Kavanagh from the Patron, on the Saturday following, and after drinking another round, went home to their respective dwellings.

In this speculation, however, they experienced a fresh disappointment; for, ere Saturday arrived, whether in consequence of secret intimation of their intention from Brady or some other friend, or in compliance with the offer of a better situation, the fact was, that Mat Kavanagh had removed to another school, distant about eighteen miles from Findramore. But they were not to be outdone; a new plan was laid, and in the course of the next week a dozen of the most enterprising and intrepid of the "boys," mounted each upon a good horse, went to Mat's new residence for the express purpose of securing him.

Perhaps our readers may scarcely believe that a love of learning was so strong among the inhabitants of Findramore as to occasion their taking such remarkable steps for establishing a schoolmaster among them; but the country was densely inhabited, the rising population exceedingly numerous, and the outcry for a schoolmaster amongst the parents of the children loud and importunate. Besides this, the illegal principles of Whiteboyism were as deeply rooted in that neighbourhood as in others; and the young men stood in need of some person who might regulate their proceedings, keep their registries, preside at and appoint their meetings, and organise with sufficient skill and precision, not only the vast numbers who had been already

enrolled as members, but who were putting forward their claims day after day to be admitted as such.

God knows it is no wonder that Ireland should be as she is, and as she long has been, when we consider the fact that those who conducted the education of her peasantry were the most active instruments in disseminating among the rising generation such pernicious principles as those which characterise this system, so deeply rooted among the people—men, whose moral characters were, with few exceptions, execrable—and nine-tenths of whom held situations of authority in these diabolical associations.

The fact, therefore, was that a double motive stimulated the inhabitants of Findramore in their efforts to procure a master. The old and middle-aged heads of families were actuated by a simple wish, inseparable from Irishmen, to have their children educated; and the young men, not only by a determination to have a properly qualified person to preside at their nightly orgies, but an inclination to improve themselves in reading, writing, and arithmetic. The circumstance I am now relating is one which actually took place; and any man acquainted with the remote parts of Ireland may have often seen bloody and obstinate quarrels among the peasantry in vindicating a priority of claim to the local residence of a schoolmaster among them. I could, within my own experience, relate two or three instances of this nature.

It was one Saturday night in the latter end of the month of May that a dozen Findramore "boys," as they were called, set out upon this most singular of all literary speculations, resolved, at whatever risk, to secure the person and effect the permanent bodily presence among them of the redoubtable Mat Kavanagh. Each man was mounted on a horse, and one of them brought a spare steed for the accommodation of the schoolmaster. The caparison of this horse was somewhat remarkable: it consisted of a wooden straddle, such as is used by the peasantry for carrying wicker paniers or creels, which are hung upon two wooden pins, that stand up out of its sides. Under it was a straw mat, to prevent the horse's back from being stripped by the straddle. On one side of this hung a large creel, and on the other a strong sack, tied round a stone of sufficient weight to balance the empty creel. The night was warm and clear, the moon and stars all threw their mellow light from a serene, unclouded sky, and the repose of nature in the short nights of this delightful season resembles that of a young virgin of sixteen—still, light, and glowing. Their way, for the most part of their journey, lay through a solitary mountain-road; and, as they did not undertake the enterprise without a good stock of poteen, their light-hearted songs and choruses awoke the echoes that slept in the mountain glens as they went along. The adventure, it is true, had as much of frolic as of seriousness in it; and merely as the means of a day's fun for the boys, it was the more eagerly entered into.

It was about midnight when they left home, and as they did not wish to arrive at the village to which they were bound until the morning should be rather advanced, the journey was as slowly performed as

possible. Every remarkable object on the way was noticed, and its history, if any particular association was connected with it, minutely detailed, whenever it happened to be known. When the sun rose, many beautiful green spots and hawthorn valleys excited, even from these unpolished and illiterate peasants, warm bursts of admiration at their fragrance and beauty. In some places the dark flowery heath clothed the mountains to the tops, from which the grey mists, lit by a flood of light, and breaking into masses before the morning breeze, began to descend into the valleys beneath them; whilst the voice of the grouse, the bleating of sheep and lambs, the pee-weet of the wheeling lap-wing, and the song of the lark threw life and animation over the previous stillness of the country. Sometimes a shallow river would cross the road, winding off into a valley that was overhung, on one side, by rugged precipices clothed with luxuriant heath and wild ash; whilst, on the other, it was skirted by a long sweep of greensward, skimmed by the twittering swallow, over which lay scattered numbers of sheep, cows, brood mares, and colts—many of them rising and stretching themselves ere they resumed their pasture, leaving the spots on which they lay of a deeper green. Occasionally, too, a sly-looking fox might be seen lurking about a solitary lamb, or brushing over the hills with a fat goose upon his back, retreating to his den among the inaccessible rocks, after having plundered some unsuspecting farmer

As they advanced into the skirts of the cultivated country, they met many other beautiful spots of scenery among the upland, considerable portions of which, particularly in long sloping valleys that faced the morning sun, were covered with hazel and brushwood; where the unceasing and simple notes of the cuckoo were incessantly plied, mingled with the more mellow and varied notes of the thrush and blackbird. Sometimes, the bright summer waterfall seemed, in the rays of the sun, like a column of light, and the springs that issued from the sides of the more distant and lofty mountains shone with a steady, dazzling brightness, on which the eye could scarcely rest. The morning, indeed, was beautiful, the fields in bloom, and everything cheerful. As the sun rose in the heavens, nature began gradually to awaken into life and happiness; nor was the natural grandeur of a Sabbath summer morning among these piles of magnificent mountains—nor its heartfelt, but more artificial beauty in the cultivated country, lost, even upon the unphilosophical "boys" of Findramore, so true is it that the appearance of nature will force enjoyment upon the most uncultivated heart.

When they had arrived within two miles of the little town in which Mat Kavanagh was fixed, they turned off into a deep glen, a little to the left; and, after having seated themselves under a whitethorn which grew on the banks of a rivulet, they began to devise the best immediate measures to be taken.

"Boys," said Tim Dolan, "how will we manage now with this thief of a schoolmaster, at all? Come, Jack Traynor, you that's up to still-house work—escapin' and carryin' away stills from gaugers, the bloody villains!—out wid yer *spake*, till we hear your opinion."

"Do ye think, boys," said Andy Connell, "that we could flatther him to come by fair mains?"

"Flatther him!" said Traynor; "and, by my sowl, if we flatther him at all, it must be by the hair of the head. No, no; let us bring him first whether he will or not, an' ax his consent afther wards?"

"I'll tell you what it is, boys," continued Connell, "I'll hould a wager, if you lave him to me, I'll bring him wid his own consint."

"No, nor sorra that you'll do, nor could do," replied Traynor; "for, along wid everything else, he think's he's not jist doated on by the Findramore people, being one of the Ballyscanlan tribe. No, no: let two of us go to his place, and purtind that we have other business in the fair of Clansallagh on Monday next, and ax him in to dhrink, for he'll not refuse that, anyhow; then, when he's half tipsy, ax him to convoy us this far; we'll then meet you here, an' tell him some palaver or other—sit down again where we are now, and, afther making him dead dhrunk, hoist a big stone in the creel, and Mat in the sack on the other side, wid his head out, and off wid him; and he will know neither act nor part about it till we're at Findramore."

Having approved of this project, they pulled out each a substantial complement of stout oaten bread, which served, along with the whisky, for breakfast. The two persons pitched on for decoying Mat were Dolan and Traynor, who accordingly set out, full of glee at the singularity and drollness of their undertaking. It is unnecessary to detail the ingenuity with which they went about it—because, in consequence of Kavanagh's love of drink, very little ingenuity was necessary One circumstance, however, came to light, which gave them much encouragement, and that was a discovery that Mat by no means relished his situation.

In the meantime, those who stayed behind in the glen felt their patience begin to flag a little, because of the delay made by the others, who had promised, if possible, to have the schoolmaster in the glen before two o'clock. But the fact was that Mat, who was far less deficient in hospitality than in learning, brought them into his house, and not only treated them to plenty of whisky, but made the wife prepare a dinner, for which he detained them, swearing that, except they stopped to partake of it, he would not convoy them to the place appointed. Evening was, therefore, tolerably far advanced when they made their appearance at the glen, in a very equivocal state of sobriety—Mat being by far the steadiest of the three, but still considerably the worse for what he had taken. He was now welcomed by a general huzza; and on his expressing his surprise at the appearances, they pointed to their horses, telling him that they were bound for the fair of Clansallagh, for the purpose of selling them. This was the more probable as, when a fair occurs in Ireland, it is usual for cattle-dealers, particularly horse-jockeys, to effect sales and "show" their horses on the evening before.

Mat now sat down, and was vigorously plied with strong poteen—songs were sung, stories told, and every device resorted to that was

calculated to draw out and heighten his sense of enjoyment; nor were their efforts without success; for, in the course of a short time, Mat was free from all earthly care, being incapable of either speaking or standing.

"Now, boys," said Dolan, "let us do the thing clane an' dacent. Let you, Jem Coogan, Brian Murphy, Paddy Delany, and Andy Connell, go back, and tell the wife and two childher a cock-and-a-bull story about Mat—say that he is coming to Findramore for good and all, and that'll be thruth, you know; and that he ordhered yees to bring her and them afther him; and we can come back for the furniture to-morrow."

A word was enough—they immediately set off; and the others, not wishing that Mat's wife should witness the mode of his conveyance, proceeded home, for it was now dusk. The plan succeeded admirably; and in a short time the wife and children, mounted behind the "boys" on the horses, were on the way after them to Findramore.

The reader is already aware of the plan they had adopted for translating Mat; but, as it was extremely original, I will explain it somewhat more fully. The moment the schoolmaster was intoxicated to the necessary point—that is to say, totally helpless and insensible—they opened the sack and put him in, heels foremost, tying it in such a way about his neck as might prevent his head from getting into it, thus avoiding the danger of suffocation. The sack, with Mat at full length in it, was then fixed to the pin of the straddle, so that he was in an erect posture during the whole journey. A creel was then hung at the other side, in which was placed a large stone, of sufficient weight to preserve an equilibrium; and, to prevent any accident, a droll fellow sat astride behind the straddle, amusing himself and the rest by breaking jokes upon the novelty of Mat's situation.

"Well, Mat, *ma bouchal*, how duv ye like your sitivation? I believe, for all your larnin', the Findramore boys have *sacked* you at last?"

"Ay," exclaimed another, "he *is* sacked at last, in spite of his Matthew-maticks."

"An', be my sowks," observed Traynor, "he'd be a long time goin' up a Maypowl in the state he's in—his own snail would bate him."[1]

"Yes," said another, "but he desarves credit for travellin' from Clansallagh to Findramore, widout layin' a foot to the ground—

> Wan day wid Captain Whisky I wrastled a fall,
> But faith I was no match for the captain at all—
> But faith I was no match for the captain at all,
> Though the landlady's measures they were damnable small.
> Tooral, looral, looral, looral, lido,

Whoo-hurroo! my darlings—success to the Findramore boys! Hurroo—hurroo—the Findramore boys for ever!"

"Boys, did ever yees hear the song Mat made on Ned Mullen's

[1] This alludes to a question in Gough's Arithmetic, which is considered diffienlt by hedge schoolmasters.

fight wid Jemmy Connor's gander? Well, here it is to the tune of 'Brian O'Lynn'—

> As Ned and the gander wor basting each other,
> I hard a loud cry from the grey goose his mother;
> I ran to assist him, wid my great speed,
> Bud before I arrived the poor gander did bleed.
> 'Alas!' says the gander, 'I'm very ill-trated,
> For tracherous Mullen has me fairly defated;
> Bud had you been here for to show me fair play,
> I could leather his *puckan*[1] around the lee bray.

"Bravo! Mat," addressing the insensible schoolmaster—"success, poet. Hurroo for the Findramore boys! the Bridge boys for ever!"

They then commenced, in a tone of mock gravity, to lecture him upon his future duties—detailing the advantages of his situation, and the comforts he would enjoy among them—although they might as well have addressed themselves to the stone on the other side. In this manner they got along, amusing themselves at Mat's expense, and highly elated at the success of their undertaking. About two o'clock in the morning they reached the top of the little hill above the village, when, on looking back along the level stretch of road which I have already described, they noticed their companions, with Mat's wife and children, moving briskly after them. A general huzza now took place, which, in a few minutes, was answered by two or three dozen of the young folks, who were assembled in Barny Brady's waiting for their arrival. The scene now became quite animated—cheer after cheer succeeded—jokes, laughter, and rustic wit, pointed by the spirit of Brady's poteen, flew briskly about. When Mat was unsacked, several of them came up, and, shaking him cordially by the hand, welcomed him among them. To the kindness of this reception, however, Mat was wholly insensible, having been for the greater part of the journey in a profound sleep. The boys next slipped the loop of the sack off the straddle-pin; and carrying Mat into a farmer's house, they deposited him in a settle-bed, where he slept, unconscious of the journey he had performed, until breakfast-time on the next morning. In the meantime, the wife and children were taken care of by Mrs. Connell, who provided them with a bed and every other comfort which they could require. The next morning, when Mat awoke, his first call was for a drink. I should have here observed that Mrs. Kavanagh had been sent for by the good woman in whose house Mat had slept, that they might all breakfast and have a drop together, for they had already succeeded in reconciling *her* to the change.

"Wather!" said Mat—"a drink of wather, if it's to be had for love or money, or I'll split wid druth—I'm all in a state of conflagration; and my head—by the sowl of Newton, the inventor of fluxions, but my head is a complete illucidation of the centrifugle motion, so it is. Tundher-an-turf! is there no wather to be had? Nancy, I say, for God's sake, quicken yourself wid the hydraulics, or the best

[1] Paunch.

mathematician in Ireland's gone to the abode of Euclid and Pythagoras, that first invented the multiplication table."

On cooling his burning blood with the "hydraulics," he again lay down, with the intention of composing himself for another sleep; but his eye having noticed the novelty of his situation, he once more called Nancy.

"Nancy, avourneen," he inquired, "will you be afther resolving me one single proposition—Where am I at the present spaking? Is it in the *Siminary* at home, Nancy?"

Nancy, in the meantime, had been desired to answer in the affirmative, hoping that if his mind was made easy on that point, he might refresh himself by another hour or two's sleep, as he appeared to be not at all free from the effects of his previous intoxication.

"Why, Mat, jewel, where else would you be, alannah, but at home? Sure, isn't here Jack, an' Biddy, an' myself, Mat, agra, along wid me. Your head isn't well, but all you want is a good rousin' sleep."

"Very well, Nancy—very well; that's enough—quite satisfacthory—*quod erat demonstrandum.* May all kinds of bad luck rest upon the Findramore boys, anyway! The unlucky vagabonds—I'm the *third* they've done up. Nancy, off wid ye, like quicksilver, for the priest."

"The priest? Why, Mat, jewel, what puts that in your head? Sure, there's nothing wrong wid ye, only the sup o' drink you tuck yestherday."

"Go, woman," said Mat: "did you ever know me to make a *calculation?* I tell you, I'm *non compos mentis* from head to heel. Head! by my sowl, Nancy, it'll soon be a *caput mortuum* wid me—I'm far gone in a disease they call an ophtical delusion—the devil a thing less it is—me bein' in my own place, an' to think I'm lyin' in a settle-bed; that there is a large dresser, covered wid pewter dishes and plates; and, to crown all, the door on the wrong side of the house. Off wid ye, and tell his reverence that I want to be anointed, and to die in pace and charity wid all men. May the most especial kind of bad luck light down upon you, Findramore, and all that's in you, both man and baste—you have given *me* my gruel along wid the rest; but, thank God, you won't hang me, anyhow! Off, Nancy, for the priest, till I die like a Christhan, in pace and forgiveness wid the world;—all kinds of hard fortune to them! Make haste, woman, if you expect me to die like a Christhan! If they had let me alone till I'd publish to the world my Treatise upon Conic Sections—but to be cut off on my march to fame. Another draught of the hydraulics, Nancy, an' then for the priest: but see, bring Father Connell, the curate, for he understands something about Matthew-maticks; an' never heed Father Roger, for little he knows about them, not even the difference between a right line—in the page of history, to his everlasting disgrace, be it recorded!"

"Mat," replied Nancy, scarcely preserving her gravity, "keep yourself from talkin', an' fall asleep, then you'll be well enough."

"Is there e'er a sup at all in the house?" said Mat; "if there is let me get it; for there's an ould proverb, though it's a most un-

mathematical axiom as ever was invinted—' Try a hair of the same dog that bit you.' Give me a glass, Nancy, anyhow, an' you can go for Father Connell after. Oh, by the sowl of Isaac, that invented fluxions, what's this for?"

A general burst of laughter followed this demand and ejaculation; and Mat sat up once more in the settle, and examined the place with keener scrutiny. Nancy herself laughed heartily; and, as she handed him the full glass, entered into an explanation of the circumstances attending his translation.

Mat, at all times rather of a pliant disposition, felt rejoiced on finding that he was still *compos mentis;* and on hearing what took place, he could not help entering into the humour of the enterprise, at which he laughed as heartily as any of them.

"Mat," said the farmer, and half a dozen of the neighbours, "you're a happy man; there's a hundred of the boys have a school-house half built for you this same blessed sunshiny mornin', while you're lying at ase in your bed."

"By the sowl of Newton, that invinted fluxions!" replied Mat, "but I'll take revenge for the disgrace you put upon my profession, by stringing up a schoolmaster among you, and I'll hang you all! It's death to stale a fourfooted animal; but what do you desarve for stalin' a Christian baste, a two-legged schoolmaster without feathers, eighteen miles, and he not to know it?"

In the course of a short time Mat was dressed, and having found benefit from the "hair of the dog that bit him," he tried another glass, which strung his nerves, or, as he himself expressed it—"they've got the raal mathematical tinsion again." What the farmer said, however, about the school-house had been true. Early that morning all the growing and grown young men of Findramore and its "vircinity" had assembled, selected a suitable spot, and, with merry hearts, were then busily engaged in erecting a school-house for their general accommodation.

The manner of building hedge school-houses being rather curious, I will describe it. The usual spot selected for their erection is a ditch on the roadside, in some situation where there will be as little damp as possible. From such a spot an excavation is made equal to the size of the building, so that, when this is scooped out, the back side-wall and the two gables are already formed, the banks being dug perpendicularly. The front side-wall, with a window in each side of the door, is then built of clay or green sods laid along in rows; the gables are also topped with sods, and, perhaps, a row or two laid upon the back side-wall, if it should be considered too low. Having got the erection of Mat's house thus far, they procured a scraw-spade, and repaired with a couple of dozen of cars to the next bog, from which they cut the light heathy surface in strips the length of the roof. A scraw-spade is an instrument resembling the letter T, with an iron plate at the lower end, considerably bent, and well adapted to the purpose for which it is intended. Whilst one party cut the scraws, another bound the *couples* and *bauks*, and a third cut as many green branches as

were sufficient to wattle it. The couples, being bound, were raised—the ribs laid on—then the wattles, and afterwards the scraws.

Whilst these successive processes went forward, many others had been engaged all the morning cutting rushes; and the scraws were no sooner laid on than half a dozen thatchers mounted the roof, and long before the evening was closed a school-house, capable of holding near a hundred children, was finished. But among the peasantry no new house is ever put up without a hearth-warming and a dance. Accordingly the clay floor was paired—a fiddler procured—Barny Brady and his stock of poteen sent for; the young women of the village and surrounding neighbourhood attended in their best finery; dancing commenced—and it was four o'clock the next morning when the merrymakers departed, leaving Mat a new home and a hard floor, ready for the reception of his scholars.

Business now commenced. At nine o'clock the next day Mat's furniture was settled in a small cabin, given to him at a cheap rate by one of the neighbouring farmers; for, whilst the school-house was being built, two men, with horses and cars, had gone to Clansallagh, accompanied by Nancy, and removed the furniture, such as it was, to their new residence. Nor was Mat, upon the whole, displeased at what had happened; he was now fixed in a flourishing country—fertile and well cultivated; nay, the bright landscape which his school-house commanded was sufficient in itself to reconcile him to his situation. The inhabitants were in comparatively good circumstances; many of them wealthy, respectable farmers, and capable of remunerating him very decently for his literary labours; and what was equally flattering, there was a certainty of his having a numerous and well-attended school, in a neighbourhood with whose inhabitants he was acquainted.

Honest, kind-hearted Paddy!—pity that you should ever feel distress or hunger!—pity that you should be compelled to seek in another land, the hard-earned pittance by which you keep the humble cabin over the head of your chaste wife and naked children! Alas! what noble materials for composing a national character, of which humanity might be justly proud, do the lower orders of the Irish possess, if raised and cultivated by a Christian education! Pardon me, gentle readers, for this momentary ebullition; I grant I am a little dark now. I assure you, however, the tear of enthusiastic admiration is warm on my eyelids, when I remember the flitches of bacon, the sacks of potatoes, the bags of meal, the *miscawns* of butter, and the dishes of eggs—not omitting crate after crate of turf—which came in such rapid succession to Mat Kavanagh during the first week in which he opened his school. Ay, and many a bottle of stout poteen, when

The eye of the gauger saw it not,

was, with a sly, good-humoured wink, handed over to Mat, or Nancy, no matter which, from under the comfortable drab jock, with velvet-covered collar, erect about the honest ruddy face of a warm, smiling farmer, or even the tattered frieze of a poor labourer—anxious to secure the attention of the "masther" to his little "*Shoneen*," whom, in the

extravagance of his ambition, he destined to "wear the robes as a clargy." Let no man say, I repeat, that the Irish are not fond of education.

In the course of a month Mat's school was full to the doorposts, for, in fact, he had the parish to himself—many attending from a distance of three, four, and five miles. His merits, however, were believed to be great, and his character for learning stood high, though unjustly so: for a more superficial, and, at the same time, a more presuming dunce never existed; but his character alone could secure him a good attendance; he, therefore, belied the unfavourable prejudices against the Findramore folk which had gone abroad, and was a proof, in his own person, that the reason of the former schoolmasters' miscarriage lay in the belief of their incapacity which existed among the people. But Mat was one of those showy, shallow fellows, who did not lack for assurance.

The first step a hedge schoolmaster took on establishing himself in a school was to write out, in his best copperplate hand, a flaming advertisement, detailing, at full length, the several branches he professed himself capable of teaching. I have seen many of these—as who that is acquainted with Ireland has not?—and, beyond all doubt, if the persons that issued them were acquainted with the various heads recapitulated, they must have been buried in the most profound obscurity, as no man but a walking encyclopædia—an Admirable Crichton—could claim an intimacy with them, embracing, as they often did, the whole circle of human knowledge. 'Tis true, the vanity of the pedagogue had full scope in these advertisements, as there was none to bring him to an account, except some rival, who could only attack him on those practical subjects which were known to both. Independently of this, there was a good-natured collusion between them on those points which were beyond their knowledge, inasmuch as they were not practical but speculative, and by no means involved their character or personal interests. On the next Sunday, therefore, after Mat's establishment at Findramore, you might see a circle of the peasantry assembled at the chapel-door, perusing, with suitable reverence and admiration on their faces, the following advertisement; or, perhaps, Mat himself, with a learned, consequential air, in the act of explaining it to them.

"*EDUCATION.*

"*Mr. Matthew Kavanagh, Philomath and Professor of the Learned Languages, begs leave to inform the Inhabitants of Findramore and its vircinity, that he Lectures on the following Branches of Education, in his Seminary at the above-recited place:—*

"Spelling, Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic, upon altogether *new* principles, hitherto undiscovered by any excepting himself, and for which he expects a *Patent* from Trinity College, Dublin; or, at any rate, from Squire Johnston, Esq., who patronizes many of the pupils: Book-keeping, by single and double entry—Geometry, Trigonometry,

Stereometry, Mensuration, Navigation, Gauging, Surveying, Dialling, Astronomy, Astrology, Austerity, Fluxions, Geography, ancient and modern—Maps, the Projection of the *Spear*—Algebra, the Use of the Globes, Natural and Moral Philosophy, Pneumatics, Optics, Dioptics, Catroptics, Hydraulics, Ærostatics, Geology, Glorification, Divinity, Mythology, Midicinality, Physic, by theory only, Metaphysics practically, Chemistry, Electricity, Galvanism, Mechanics, Antiquities, Agriculture, Ventilation, Explosion, &c.

"In Classics—Grammar, Cordery, Æsop's Fables, Erasmus' Colloquies, Cornelius Nepos, Phœdrus, Valerius Maximus, Justin, Ovid, Sallust, Virgil, Horace, Juvenal, Persius, Terence, Tully's Offices, Cicero, Manouverius Turgidus, Esculapius, Regerius, Satanus Nigrus, Quinctilian, Livy, Thomas Aquinas, Cornelius Agrippa, and Cholera Morbus.

"Greek Grammar, Greek Testament, Lucian, Homer, Sophocles, Eschylus, Thucydides, Aristophanes, Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, and the Works of Alexander the Great; the manners, habits, customs, usages, meditations of the Grecians; the Greek digamma resolved, Prosody, Composition, both in prose-verse, and oratory, in English, Latin, and Greek; together with various other branches of learning and scholastic profundity—*quos enumerare longum est* —along with Irish Radically, and a small taste of Hebrew upon the Masoretic text.

"MATTHEW KAVANAGH, *Philomath.*"

Having posted this document upon the chapel-door, and in all the public places and cross roads of the parish, Mat considered himself as having done his duty. He now began to teach, and his school continued to increase to his heart's content, every day bringing him fresh scholars. In this manner he flourished till the beginning of winter, when those boys who, by the poverty of their parents, had been compelled to go to service to the neighbouring farmers flocked to him in numbers, quite voracious for knowledge. An addition was consequently built to the school-house, which was considerably too small; so that, as Christmas approached, it would be difficult to find a more numerous or merry establishment under the roof of a hedge school. But it is time to give an account of its interior.

The reader will, then, be pleased to picture to himself such a house as I have already described—in a line with the hedge; the eave of the back roof within a foot of the ground behind it; a large hole exactly in the middle of the "*riggin*," as a chimney; immediately under which is an excavation in the floor, burned away by a large fire of turf, loosely heaped together. This is surrounded by a circle of urchins, sitting on the bare earth, and exhibiting a series of speckled shins, all radiating towards the fire, like sausages on a *Poloni* dish. There they are—wedged as close as they can sit; one with half a thigh off his breeches—another with half an arm off his tattered coat —a third without breeches at all, wearing as a substitute a piece of his mother's old petticoat, pinned about his loins—a fourth, no coat—

a fifth, with a cap on him, because he has got a scald, from having sat under the juice of fresh hung bacon—a sixth with a black eye—a seventh with two rags about his heels to keep his kibes clean—an eighth crying to get home, because he has got a headache, though it may be as well to hint that there is a drag-hunt to start from beside his father's in the course of the day. In this ring, with his legs stretched in a most lordly manner, sits, upon a deal chair, Mat himself, with his hat on, basking in the enjoyment of unlimited authority. His dress consists of a black coat, considerably in want of repair, transferred to his shoulders through the means of a clothes-broker in the county town ; a white cravat, round a large stuffing, having hat part which comes in contact with the chin somewhat streaked with brown—a black waistcoat with one or two "tooth-an'-egg" metal buttons sewed on where the original had fallen off—black corduroy inexpressibles, twice dyed, and sheep's-grey stockings. In his hand is a large broad ruler, the emblem of his power, the woful instrument of executive justice, and the signal of terror to all within his jurisdiction. In a corner below is a pile of turf, where, on entering, every boy throws his two sods with a pitch from under his left arm. He then comes up to the master, catches his forelock with finger and thumb, and bobs down his head, by way of making him a bow, and goes to his seat. Along the walls on the ground is a series of round stones, some of them capped with a straw collar or hassock, on which the boys sit; others have bosses, and many of them hobs—a light but compact kind of boggy substance found in the mountains. On these several of them sit ; the greater number of them, however, have no seats whatever, but squat themselves down, without compunction, on the hard floor. Hung about, on wooden pegs driven into the walls, are the shapeless yellow "*caubeens*" of such as can boast the luxury of a hat, or caps made of goat or hare skin, the latter having the ears of the animal rising ludicrously over the temples, or cocked out at the sides, and the scut either before or behind, according to the taste or the humour of the wearer. The floor, which is only swept every Saturday, is strewed over with tops of quills, pens, pieces of broken slate, and tattered leaves of "Reading made Easy," or fragments of old copies. In one corner is a knot engaged at "Fox-and-geese," or the "Walls of Troy," on their slates ; in another, a pair of them are "fighting bottles," which consists in striking the bottoms together, and he whose bottle breaks first of course loses. Behind the master is a third set, playing "heads and points"—a game of pins. Some are more industriously employed in writing their copies which they perform seated on the ground, with their paper on a copy-board—a piece of planed deal the size of the copy, an appendage now nearly exploded—their cheek-bones laid within half an inch of the left side of the copy, and the eye set to guide the motion of the hand across, and to regulate the straightness of the lines and the forms of the letters. Others, again, of the more grown boys, are working their sums with becoming industry. In a dark corner are a pair of urchins thumping each other, their eyes steadily fixed on the master, lest he might happen to glance in that

direction. Near the master himself are the larger boys, from twenty-two to fifteen—shaggy-headed slips, with loose-breasted shirts lying open about their bare chests ; ragged colts, with white, dry, bristling beards upon them, that never knew a razor ; strong stockings on their legs ; heavy brogues, with broad, nail-paved soles ; and breeches open at the knees. Nor is the establishment altogether without females ; but these, in hedge schools, were too few in number to form a distinct class. They were, for the most part, the daughters of wealthy farmers, who considered it necessary to their respectability that they should not be altogether illiterate; such a circumstance being a considerable drawback, in the opinion of an admirer, from the character of a young woman for whom he was about to propose—a drawback, too, which was always weighty in proportion to her wealth or respectability.

Having given our readers an imperfect sketch of the interior of Matt's establishment, we will now proceed, however feebly, to represent him at work—with all the machinery of the system in full operation.

" Come, boys, rehearse—(buz, buz, buz)—I'll soon be after calling up the first spelling lesson—(buz, buz, buz)—then the mathematician —bookkeepers—Latinists and Grecians, successfully. (Buz, buz, buz.) Silence there below !—your pens. Tim Casey, isn't this a purty hour o' the day for you to come into school at ; arrah, and what kept you, Tim ? Walk up wid yourself here, till we have a confabulation together ; you see I love to be talking to you."

" Sir, Larry Branagan, here ; he's throwing spits at me out of his pen."—(Buz, buz, buz.)

" By my sowl, Larry, there's a rod in steep for you."

" Fly away, Jack—fly away, Jill ; come again, Jack——"

" I had to go to Paddy Nowlan's for tobaccy, sir, for my father." (Weeping, with his hand knowingly across his face—one eye laughing at his comrades.)

" You lie, it wasn't."

" If you call me a liar agin, I'll give you a dig in the mug."

" It's not in your jacket."

" Isn't it ?"

" Behave yourself ; ha ! there's the masther looking at you—ye'll get it now."

" None at all, Tim ? And she's not after sinding an excuse wid you ? What's that undher your arm ? "

" My Gough, sir."—(Buz, buz, buz.)

" Silence, boys. And you blackguard Lilliputian, you, what kept you away till this ? "

" One bird pickin', two men thrashin' ; one bird pickin', two men thrashin' ; one bird pickin'——"

" Sir, they're stickin' pins in me here."

" Who is, Briney ? "

" I don't know, sir ; they're all at it."

" Boys, I'll go down to yous."

" I can't carry him, sir ; he'd be too heavy for me. Let Larry Toole

do it, he's stronger nor me ; any way, there he's putting a corker pin in his mouth."—(Buz, buz, buz.)

"Whoo-hoo-hoo-hoo ! I'll never stay away agin, sir ; indeed I won't, sir. Oh, sir dear, pardon me this wan time ; and if ever you cotch me doing the like agin, I'll give you lave to welt the sowl out of me."—(Buz, buz, buz.)

"Behave yourself, Barny Byrne."

"I'm not touching you."

"Yes, you are ; didn't you make me blot my copy."

"Ho, by the livin', I'll pay you goin' home for this."

"Hand me the taws."

"Whoo-hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo—what'll I do, at all at all ! Oh, sir dear, sir dear, sir dear—hoo-hoo-hoo ! "

"Did she send no message, good or bad, before I lay on ? "

"Oh, not a word, sir, only that my father killed a pig yestherday, and he wants you to go up to-day at dinner-time."—(Buz, buz, buz.)

"It's time to get lave ; it isn't—it is ; it isn't—it is," &c.

"You lie, I say ; your faction never was able to fight ours. Didn't we lick all your dirty breed in Buillagh-battha fair ? "

"Silence there."—(Buz, buz, buz.)

"Will you meet us on Sathurday, and we'll fight it out clane ? "

"Ha, ha, ha ! Tim, but you got a big fright, anyhow. Whist, ma bouchal, sure I was only jokin' you ; and sorry I'd be to bate your father's son, Tim. Come over and sit beside myself at the fire here. Get up, Micky Donoghue, you big burnt-shinn'd spalpeen you, and let the dacent boy sit at the fire."

"Hullabaloo hoo-hoo-hoo—to go to give me such a welt only for sitting at the fire, and me brought turf wid me."

"To-day, Tim ? "

"Yes, sir."

"At dinner-time, is id ? "

"Yes, sir."

"Faith, the dacent strain was always in the same family."—(Buz, buz, buz.)

"Horns, horns, cock horns : oh, you up'd wid them, you lifted your fingers—that's a mark, now—hould your face till I blacken you."

"Do you call thim two sods, Jack Lanigan ? why, 'tis only one long one broke in the middle ; but you must make it up to-morrow, Jack. How is your mother's tooth ?—did she get it pulled out yet ? "

"No, sir."

"Well, tell her to come to me, an' I'll write a charm for it that'll cure her.—What kept you till now, Paddy Magouran ? "

"Couldn't come any sooner, sir."

"You couldn't, sir ; and why, sir, couldn't you come any sooner, sir ? "

"See, sir, what Andy Nowlan done to my copy ? "—(Buz, buz, buz.)

"Silence ! I'll massacree yees if yees don't make less noise."—(Buz, buz, buz.)

"I was down with Mrs. Kavanagh, sir."

"You were, Paddy—an' Paddy, *ma bouchal*, what war you doing there, Paddy?"

"Masther, sir, spake to Jem Kenny here; he made my nose bleed."

"Eh, Paddy?"

"I was bringin' her a layin' hen, sir, that my mother promised her at mass on Sunday last."

"Ah, Paddy, you're a game bird yourself, wid your layin' hens; you're as full o' mischief as an egg's full o' mate—(*omnes*, ha, ha, ha, ha!) Silence, boys—what are you laughin' at?—ha, ha, ha! Paddy, can you spell Nebachodnazure for me?"

"No, sir."

"No, nor a better scholar, Paddy, could not do that, *ma bouchal;* but *I'll* spell it for you. Silence, boys—whist, all of yees, till I spell Nebachodnazure for Paddy Magouran. Listen; and you yourself, Paddy, are one of the letthers:—

A turf and a *clod* spells Nebachod—
A knife and a razure spells Nebachodnazure—
Three pair of boots and five pair of shoes
Spells Nebachodnazure, the King of the Jews

Now, Paddy, that's spelling Nebachodnazure by the science of Ventilation; but you'll never go that deep, Paddy."

"I want to go out, if you plase, sir."

"Is that the way you ax me, you vagabone?"

"I want to go out, sir"—(pulling down the forelock).

"Yes, that's something dacenter; by the sowl of Newton, that invinted fluxions, if ever you forget to make a bow again I'll flog the enthrils out of you—wait till the pass comes in."

Then comes the spelling lesson.

"Come, boys, stand up to the spelling lesson."

"Micky, show me your book till I look at *my* word. I'm fifteenth."

"Wait till I see my own."

"Why do you crush for."

"That's my place."

"No, it's not."

"Sir, spake to——I'll tell the masther."

"What's the matther there?"

"Sir, he won't let me into my place."

"I'm before you."

"No, you're not."

"I say I am."

"You lie, pug-face. Ha! I called you pug-face; tell now, if you dare."

"Well, boys, down with your pins in the book; who's king?"

"I am, sir."

"Who's queen?"

"Me, sir."

"Who's prince?"

"I am prince, sir."

"Tag-rag and bob-tail, fall into your places."

"I've no pin, sir."

"Well, down with you to the tail—now, boys."

Having gone through the spelling task, it was Mat's custom to give out six *hard words*, selected according to his judgment, as a final test, but he did not always confine himself to that. Sometimes he would put a number of syllables arbitrarily together, forming a most heterogeneous combination of articulate sounds.

"Now, boys, here's a deep word, that'll thry yees: come, Larry, spell *me-mo-man-dran-san-ti-fi-can-du-ban-dan-ti-al-i-ty*, or *mis-an-thro-po-mor-phi-ta-ni-a-nus-mi-ca-li-a-tion*;—that's too hard for you, is it? Well, then, spell phthisic. Oh, that's physic you're spellin'. Now, Larry, do you know the difference between physic and phthisic?"

"No, sir."

"Well, I'll expound it: phthisic, you see, manes—whisht, boys; will yees hould yer tongues there—phthisic, Larry, signifies—that is, phthisic—mind, it's not physic I'm expounding, phthisic—boys, will yees stop yer noise there—signifies——but, Larry, it's so deep a word in larnin' that I should draw it out on a slate for you: and now I remimber, man alive, you're not far enough on yet to undherstand it: but what's physic, Larry?"

"Isn't that, sir, what my father tuck the day he got sick, sir?"

"That's the very thing, Larry: it has what larned men call a medical property, and resembles little rickety Dan Reilly there—it retrogrades. Och! och! I'm the boy that knows things—you see now how I expounded them two hard words for yees, boys—don't yees?"

"Yes, sir," &c. &c.

"So, Larry, you haven't the larnin' for that either: but here's an 'asier one—spell me Ephabridotas (Epaphroditas)—you can't! hut! man—you're a big dunce entirely, that little shoneen Sharkey there below would *sack*. God be wid the day when I was the likes of you; it's I that was the bright gorsoon entirely—and so sign was on it, when a great larned traveller—silence, boys, till I tell yees this (a dead silence)—from Thrinity College, all the way in Dublin, happened to meet me one day—seeing the slate and Gough, you see, undher my arm, he axes me, 'Arrah, Mat,' says he, 'what are you *in?*' says he. 'Faix, I'm in my waistcoat, for one thing,' says I, off-hand—silence, childhre, and don't laugh so loud—(ha, ha, ha!) So he looks closer at me: 'I see that,' says he, 'but what are you reading?' 'Nothing, at all at all,' says I; 'bad manners to the taste, as you may see, if you've your eyesight.' 'I think,' says he, 'you'll be apt to *die* in your waistcoat;' and set spurs to a fine saddle mare he rid—faith, he did so—thought me so cute—(*omnes:* ha, ha, ha!) Whisht, boys, whisht; isn't it a terrible thing that I can't tell yees a joke, but you split your sides laughing at it—(ha, ha, ha!)—don't laugh so loud, Barney Casey"—(ha, ha, ha!).

Barney: "I wart to go out, if you plase, sir."

"Go, avick; you'll be a good scholar yet, Barney. Faith, Barney knows whin to laugh, anyhow.

"Well, Larry, you can't spell Ephabridotas? -thin here's a short weeshy one, and whoever spells it will get the pins;—spell a red rogue wid three letters. You, Micky? Dan? Jack? Natty? Alick? Andy? Pether? Jim? Tim? Pat? Rody? you? you? you? Now, boys, I'll hould ye my little Andy here, that's only beginning the *Rational Spelling Book*, bates you all; come here, Andy, alanna: now, boys, if he bates you, you must all bring him a little *miscawn* of butter between two kale blades, in the mornin', for himself; here, Andy avourneen, spell red rogue wid three letthers."

Andy: "M a t—Mat."

"No, no, avick, that's myself, Andy; it's red rogue, Andy—hem!—F——"

"F o x—fox."

"That's a man, Andy. Now, boys, mind what you owe Andy in the mornin', plase God, won't yees?"

"Yes, sir." "Yes, sir." "Yes, sir." "I will, sir." "And I will, sir." "And so will I, sir," &c. &c. &c.

I know not whether the Commissioners of Education found the monitorial system of instruction in such of the old hedge schools as maintained an obstinate resistance to the innovations of modern plans. That Bell and Lancaster deserve much credit for applying and extending the principle (I speak without any reference to its merits) I do not hesitate to grant; but it is unquestionably true that the principle was reduced to practice in Irish hedge schools long before either of these worthy gentlemen were in existence. I do not, indeed, at present remember whether or not they claim it as a discovery, or simply as an adaptation of a practice which experience, in accidental cases, had found useful, and which they considered capable of more extensive benefit. I remember many instances, however, in which it was applied—and applied, in my opinion, though not as a permanent system, yet more judiciously than it is at present. I think it a mistake to suppose that silence, among a number of children in school, is conducive to the improvement either of health or intellect. That the chest and the lungs are benefited by giving full play to the voice I think will not be disputed; and that a child is capable of more intense study and abstraction in the din of a school-room than in partial silence (if I may be permitted the word) is a fact which, I think, any rational observation would establish. There is something cheering and cheerful in the noise of friendly voices about us—it is a restraint taken off the mind, and it will run the lighter for it; it produces more excitement, and puts the intellect in a better frame for study. The obligation to silence, though it may give the master more ease, imposes a new moral duty upon the child, the sense of which must necessarily weaken his application. Let the boy speak aloud, if he pleases—that is, to a certain pitch; let his blood circulate; let the natural secretions take place, and the physical effluvia be thrown off by a free exercise of voice and limbs: but do not keep him dumb and motionless as a statue—his

blood and his intellect both in a state of stagnation, and his spirit below zero. Do not send him in quest of knowledge alone, but let him have cheerful companionship on his way; for depend upon it that the man who expects too much either in discipline or morals from a boy is not, in my opinion, acquainted with human nature. If an urchin titter at his own joke, or that of another, if he give him a jagg of a pin under the desk, imagine not that it will do him an injury, whatever phrenologists may say concerning the organ of destructiveness. It is an exercise to the mind, and he will return to his business with greater vigour and effect. Children are not men, nor influenced by the same motives—they do not reflect, because their capacity for reflection is imperfect; so is their reason: whereas, on the contrary, their faculties for education (excepting judgment, which strengthens my argument) are in greater vigour in youth than in manhood. The general neglect of this distinction is, I am convinced, a stumbling-block in the way of youthful instruction, though it characterises all our modern systems. We should never forget that they are children; nor should we bind them by a system whose standard is taken from the maturity of human intellect. We may bend our reason to theirs, but we cannot elevate their capacity to our own. We may produce an external appearance sufficiently satisfactory to ourselves; but, in the meantime, it is probable that the child may be growing in hypocrisy, and settling down into the habitual practice of a fictitious character.

But another and more serious objection may be urged against the present strictness of scholastic discipline—which is, that it deprives the boy of a sense of free and independent agency. I speak this with limitations, for a master should be a monarch in his school, but by no means a tyrant; and decidedly the very worst species of tyranny is that which stretches the young mind upon the bed of too rigorous a discipline—like the despot who exacted from his subjects so many barrels of perspiration whenever there came a long and severe frost. Do not familiarise the mind when young to the toleration of slavery, lest it prove afterwards incapable of recognising and relishing the principle of an honest and manly independence. I have known many children on whom a rigour of discipline, affecting the mind only (for corporal punishment is now almost exploded), impressed a degree of timidity almost bordering an pusillanimity. Away, then, with the specious and long-winded arguments of a false and mistaken philosophy. A child will be a child, and a boy a boy, to the conclusion of the chapter. Bell or Lancaster would not relish the pap or caudle-cup three times a day: neither would the infant on the breast feel comfortable after a gorge of ox-beef. Let them, therefore, put a little of the mother's milk of human kindness and consideration into their strait-laced systems.

A hedge schoolmaster was the general scribe of the parish, to whom all who wanted letters or petitions written uniformly applied—and these were glorious opportunities for the pompous display of pedantry. The remuneration usually consisted of a bottle of whisky.

A poor woman, for instance, informs Mat that she wishes to have a letter written to her son, who is a soldier abroad.

"An' how long is he gone, ma'am?"

"Och, thin, masther, he's from me goin' an fifteen years; an' a comrade of his was spakin' to Jim Dwyer, an' says his ridgment's lyin' in the Island of Budanages, somewhere in the back parts of Africa."

"An' is it a letther or petition you'd be afther havin' me to indite for you, ma'am?"

"Och, a letther, sir—a letther, masther; an' may the Lord grant you all kinds of luck, good, bad, an' indifferent, both to you an' yours: an' well it's known, by the same token, that it's yourself has the nice hand at the pen entirely, an' can indite a letther or pertition that the priest o' the parish mightn't be ashamed to own to it."

"Why, then, 'tis I that ud scorn to deteriorate upon the superiminence of my own execution at inditin' wid a pen in my hand: but would you feel a delectability in my superscriptionizin' the epistolary correspondency, ma'am, that I'm about to adopt?"

"Eagh? och, what am I sayin'!—*sir*—masther—*sir?*—the noise of the crathurs, you see, is got into my ears; and, besides, I'm a bit bothered on both sides of my head, ever since I had that weary *weed.*"

"Silence, boys; bad manners to yees, will ye be aisy, you Lilliputian Bœotians—by my s——hem—upon my credit, if I go down to that corner, I'll castigate yees in dozens: I can't spake to this dacent woman, with your insuperable turbulentiality."

"Ah, avourneen, masther, but the larnin's a fine thing, anyhow; an' maybe 'tis yourself that hasn't the tongue in your head, an' can spake the tall, high-flown English; a-wurrah, but your tongue hangs well, anyhow—the Lord increase it!"

"Lanty Cassidy, are you gettin' on wid yer Stereometry? *festina, mi discipuli; vocabo Homerum, mox atque mox.* You see, ma'am, I must tache thim to spake an' effectuate a translation of the larned languages sometimes."

"Arrah, masther dear, how did you get it all into your head, at all at all?"

"Silence, boys—*tace*—'*conticuere omnes intentique ora tenebant.*' Silence, I say agin."

"You could slip over, maybe, to Doran's, masther, do you see? You'd do it betther there, I'll engage: sure an' you'd want a dhrop to steady your hand, anyhow."

"Now, boys, I am goin' to indite a small taste of literal correspondency over at the public-house here; you *literati* will hear the lessons for me, boys, till afther I'm back agin; but mind, boys, *absente domino, strepuunt servi*—meditate on the philosophy of that; and, Mick Mahon, take your slate and put down all the names; and, upon my sou—hem—credit, I'll castigate any boy guilty of *misty manners* on my retrogadation thither; *ergo momentote, cave ne titubes mandataque frangas.*"

"In throth, sir, I'd be long sarry to throuble you; but he's away fifteen years, and I wouldn't thrust it to another, and the corplar that

commands the ridgment would regard your hand-write and your iu-ditin'."

"Don't, ma'am, plade the smallest taste of apology."

"Eagh?"

"I'm happy that I can sarve you, ma'am."

"Musha, long life to you, masther, for that same, anyhow—but it's yourself that's deep in the larnin' and the langridges; the Lord increase yer knowledge—sure, an' we all want his blessin', you know."

THE RETURN.

"Well, boys, ye've been at it—here's swelled faces and bloody noses What blackened your eye, Callaghan? You're a purty prime ministher, ye boxing blackguard, you: I left you to keep pace among these factions, and you've kicked up a purty dust. What blackened your eye—egh?"

"I'll tell you, sir, whin I come in, if you plase."

"Ho, you vagabones, this is the ould work of the faction between the Bradys and the Callaghans—bastin' one another; but, by my sowl, I'll baste you all through other. You don't want to go out, Callaghan. You had fine work here since; there's a dead silence now; but I'll pay you presently. Here, Duggan, go out wid Callaghan, an' see that you bring him back in less than no time. It's not enough for your fathers and brothers to be at it, who have *a right* to fight, but you must battle betune you—have your field days itself!"

(*Duggan returns*)—"Hoo—hoo—sir, my nose. Oh, *murdher sheery*, my nose is broked!"

"Blow your nose, you spalpeen, you—where's Callaghan?"

"Oh, sir, bad luck to him every day he rises out of his bed; he got a stone in his fist, too, that he *hot* me a pelt on the nose wid, and then made off home."

"Home, is id? Start, boys, off—chase him, lie into him—asy, curse yees, take time gettin' out: that's it—keep to him—don't wait for me: take care, you little spalpeens, or you'll brake your bones, so you will: blow the dust of this road, I can't see my way in it!"

"Oh! murdher, Jem, agra, my knee's out of joint."

"My elbow's smashed, Paddy. Bad luck to him—the divil fly away wid him—oh! ha! ha!—oh! ha! ha! murdher—hard fortune to me, but little Mickey Geery fell, an' thripped the masther, an' himself's disabled now—his black breeches split too—look at him feelin' them—oh! oh! ha! ha!—by tare-an'-outy, Callaghan will be murdhered if they cotch him."

This was a specimen of civilisation which Ireland only could furnish: nothing, indeed, could be more perfectly ludicrous than such a chase; and such scenes were by no means uncommon in hedge schools; for, wherever severe punishment was dreaded—and, in truth, most of the hedge-masters were unfeeling tyrants—the boy, if sufficiently grown to make a good race, usually broke away, and fled home at the top of his speed. The pack then were usually led on by the master, who mostly headed them himself, all in full cry, exhibiting such a scene as should be witnessed in order to be enjoyed. The neighbours, men,

women, and children, ran out to be spectators ; the labourers suspended their work to enjoy it, assembling on such eminences as commanded a full view of the pursuit.

" Bravo, boys—success, masther ; lie into him—where's your huntin'-horn, Mr. Kavanagh—he'll bate yees, if ye don't take the wind of him. Well done, Callaghan, keep up your heart, your sowl, and you'll do it asy—yer gaining on them, *ma bouchal*—the masther's down, you gallows clip, an' there's none but the scholars afther ye—he's safe."

" Not he ; I'll hould a naggin, the poor scholar has him ; don't you see he's close at his heels."

" *Done*, by my song—they'll never come up wid him ; listen to their leather crackers and cord-a-roys, as their knees bang agin one another. Hark forrit, boys ! hark forrit ! huzzaw, you thieves, huzzaw ! "

" Yer beagles is well winded, Mr. Kavanagh, an' gives good tongue."

" Well, masther, you had your chase for nothin', I see."

" Mr. Kavanagh," another would observe, " I didn't think you war so stiff in the hams as to let the gorsoon bate you that-a-way—your wind's failin', sir."

" The schoolmaster was abroad " then, and never was the " march of intellect " at once so rapid and unsuccessful.

During the summer season it was the usual practice for the scholars to transfer their paper, slates, and books to the green which lay immediately behind the schoolhouse, where they stretched themselves on the grass, and resumed their business. Mat would bring out his chair, and, placing it on the shady side of the hedge, sit with his pipe in his mouth, the contented lord of his little realm, whilst nearly a hundred and fifty scholars of all sorts and sizes lay scattered over the grass, basking under the scorching sun in all the luxury of novelty, nakedness, and freedom. The sight was original and characteristic, and such as Mr. Brougham would have been delighted with—" The schoolmaster was abroad again."

As soon as one o'clock drew near, Mat would pull out his *Ring-dial*, holding it against the sun, and declare the hour.

" Now, boys, to yer dinners, and the rest to play."

" Hurroo, darlins, to play—the masther says it's dinner-time !—whip-spur-an'-away-grey—hurroo—whack—hurroo ! "

" Masther, sir, my father bid me ax you home to yer dinner."

" No, he'll come to huz—come wid me, if you plase, sir."

" Sir, never heed them ; my mother, sir, has some of what you know—of the flitch I brought to Shoneen on last Aisther, sir."

This was a subject on which the boys gave themselves great liberty, an invitation, even when not accepted, being an indemnity for the day ; it was usually followed by a battle between the claimants, and bloody noses were the issue. The master himself, after deciding to go where he was certain of getting the best dinner, generally put an end to the quarrels by a reprimand, and then gave notice to the disappointed claimants of the successive days on which he would attend at their respective houses.

"Boys, you all know my maxim; to go, for fear of any jealousies, boys, wherever I get the *worst* dinner; so tell me now, boys, what yer dacent mothers have all got at home for me?"

"My mother killed a fat hen yesterday, sir, an' you'll have a lump of bacon and 'flat dutch' along wid it."

"We'll have hang beef and greens, sir."

"We tried the praties this mornin', sir, an' we'll have new praties, and bread and butther, sir."

"Well, it's all good, boys; but rather than show favour or affection, do you see, I'll go wid Andy, here, and take share of the hen an' bacon; but, boys, for all that, I'm fonder of the other things, you persave; and as I can't go wid you, Mat, tell your respectable mother that I'll be with her to-morrow; and with you, Larry, ma bouchal, the day afther."

If a master were a single man, he usually "went round" with the scholars each night; but there were generally a few comfortable farmers, leading men in the parish, at whose house he chiefly resided; and the children of these men were treated with the grossest and most barefaced partiality. They were altogether privileged persons, and had liberty to beat and abuse the other children of the school, who were certain of being most unmercifully flogged if they even dared to prefer a complaint against the favourites. Indeed, the instances of atrocious cruelty in hedge schools were almost incredible, and such as, in the present enlightened time, would not be permitted. As to the state of the "poor scholar," it exceeded belief; for he was friendless and unprotected. But though legal prosecutions in those days were never resorted to, yet, according to the characteristic notions of the Irish retributive justice, certain cases occurred in which a signal, and, at times, a fatal vengeance was executed on the person of the brutal master. Sometimes the brothers and other relatives of the mutilated child would come in a body to the school, and flog the pedagogue with his own taws until his back was lapped in blood. Sometimes they would beat him until few symptoms of life remained. Occasionally he would get a nocturnal notice to quit the parish in a given time, under a penalty which seldom proved a dead letter in case of non-compliance. Not unfrequently did those whom he had, when boys, treated with such barbarity go back to him, when young men, not so much for education's sake, as for the especial purpose of retaliating upon him for his former cruelty. When cases of this nature occurred, he found himself a mere cipher in his school, never daring to practise excessive severity in their presence. Instances have come to our own knowledge of masters who, for their mere amusement, would go out to the next hedge, cut a large branch of furze or thorn, and having first carefully arranged the children in a row round the walls of the school, their naked legs stretched out before them, would sweep round the branch, bristling with spikes and prickles, with all their force against their limbs, until, in a few minutes, a circle of blood was visible on the ground where they sat, their legs appearing as if they had been scarified. This the master did when

ever he happened to be drunk or in a remarkably good humour. The poor children, however, were obliged to laugh loud, and enjoy it, though the tears were falling down their cheeks in consequence of the pain he inflicted. To knock down a child with the fist was considered nothing harsh; nor, if a boy were cut or prostrated by a blow of a cudgel on the head, did he ever think of representing the master's cruelty to his parents. Kicking on the shins with the point of a brogue or shoe, bound round the edge of the sole with iron nails, until the bone was laid open, was a common punishment; and as for the usual slapping, horsing, and flogging, they were inflicted with a brutality that in every case richly deserved for the tyrant, not only a peculiar whipping by the hand of the common executioner, but a separation from civilised society by transportation for life. It is a fact, however, that in consequence of the general severity practised in hedge schools, excesses of punishment did not often produce retaliation against the master; these were only exceptions, isolated cases that did not affect the general character of the discipline in such schools.

Now, when we consider the total absence of all moral and religious principles in these establishments, and the positive presence of all that was wicked, cruel, and immoral, need we be surprised at the character of Ireland at this enlightened day. But her education and herself were neglected, and now behold the consequence!

I am sorry to perceive the writings of many respectable persons on Irish topics imbued with a tinge of spurious liberality that frequently occasions them to depart from truth. To draw the Irish character as it *is*, as the model of all that is generous, hospitable, and magnanimous, is in some degree fashionable; but although I am as warm an admirer of all that is really excellent and amiable in my countrymen as any man, yet I cannot, nor will I, extenuate their weak and indefensible points. That they possess the *elements* of a noble and exalted national character, I grant; nay, that they actually do possess such a character, under limitations, I am ready to maintain. Irishmen, setting aside their religious and political prejudices, are grateful, affectionate, honourable, faithful, generous, and even magnanimous; but under the stimulus of religious and political feeling they are treacherous, cruel, and inhuman—will murder, burn, and exterminate, not only without compunction, but with a satanic delight worthy of a savage. Their education, indeed, was truly barbarous; they were trained and habituated to cruelty, revenge, and personal hatred in their schools. Their knowledge was directed to evil purposes; disloyal principles were industriously insinuated into their minds by their teachers, every one of whom was a leader of some illegal association. The matter placed in their hands was of a most inflammatory and pernicious nature as regarded politics; and as far as religion and morality were concerned, nothing could be more gross and superstitious than the books which circulated among them. Eulogiums on murder, robbery, and theft were read with delight in the histories of Freney the Robber, and the Irish Rogues and Rapparees; ridicule of the Word of God, and

hatred to the Protestant religion, in a book called Ward's Cantos, written in Hudibrastic verse; the downfall of the Protestant Establishment, and the exaltation of the Romish Church, in Columbkill's Prophecy, and latterly in that of Pastorini; a belief in every species of religious imposture, in the Lives of the Saints, of St. Patrick, of St. Columbkill, of St. Teresa, St. Francis Xavier, the Holy Scapular, and several other works, disgraceful to human reason. Political and religious ballads of the vilest doggrel, miraculous legends of holy friars persecuted by Protestants, and of signal vengeance inflicted by the divine power on their persecutors, were in the mouths of the young and old, and of course firmly fixed in their credulity.

Their weapons of controversy were drawn from the Fifty Reasons, the Doleful Fall of Andrew Sall, the Catholic Christian, the Grounds of the Catholic Doctrine, a Net for the Fishers of Men, and several other publications of the same class. The books of amusement read in these schools, including the first mentioned in this list, were the Seven Champions of Christendom, the Seven Wise Masters and Mistresses of Rome, Don Belianis of Greece, the Royal Fairy Tales, the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, Valentine and Orson, Gesta Romanorum, Dorastus and Faunia, the History of Reynard the Fox, the Chevalier Faublax; to those I may add the Battle of Aughrim, Siege of Londonderry, History of the Young Ascanius (a name by which the Pretender was designated), and the Renowned History of the Siege of Troy; the Forty Thieves, Robin Hood's Garland, the Garden of Love and Royal Flower of Fidelity, Parimus and Parismenus; along with others, the names of which shall not appear in these pages. With this specimen of education before our eyes, is it at all extraordinary that Ireland should be as she is?

"Thady Bradly, will you come up wid your slate till I examine you in your figures? Go out, sir, and blow your nose first, and don't be after making a looking-glass out of the sleeve of your jacket. Now that Thady's out, I'll hould you, boys, that none of yees know how to expound his name—eh? do yees? But I needn't ax—well, 'tis Thadeus; and, maybe, that's as much as the priest that christened him knew. Boys, you see what it is to have the larnin'—to lade the life of a gintleman, and to be able to talk deeply wid the clargy! Now, I could run down any man in arguin', except a priest; and if the bishop was afther consecratin' me, I'd have more larnin' than the most of them; but you see I'm not consecrated—and—well, 'tis no matther—I only say that the more's the pity.

"Well, Thady, when did you go into subtraction?"

"The day beyond yesterday, sir; yarra musha, sure 'twas yourself, sir, that shet me the first sum."

"Masther, sir, Thady Bradly stole my cutter—that's *my* cutter, Thady Bradly."

"No it's not" (in a low voice).

"Sir, that's my cutter—an' there's three nicks in id."

"Thady, is that his cutter?"

"There's your cutter for you. Sir, I found it on the flure, and didn't know who own'd it."

"You know'd very well who own'd it; didn't Dick Martin see you liftin' it off o' my slate, when I was out?"

"Well, if Dick Martin saw him it's enough: an' 'tis Dick that's the tindher-hearted boy, an' would knock you down wid a lump of a stone if he saw you murtherin' but a fly!

"Well, Thady—throth Thady, I fear you'll undherstand subtraction better nor your tacher: I doubt you'll apply it to 'Practice' all your life, ma bouchal, and that you'll be apt to find it 'the Rule of False' at last. Well, Thady, from one thousand pounds, no shillings and no pince, how will you subtract one pound? Put it down on your slate—this way—

1000 00 00
1 00 00"

"I don't know how to shet about it, masther."

"You don't? an' how dare you tell me so, you *shingawn*, you—you Cornelius Agrippa, you—go to your sate and study it, or I'll—ha! be off, you ——

"Pierce Mahon, come up wid your multiplication. Pierce, multiply four hundred by two—put it down—that's it,

400
By 2."

"Twice nought is one." (Whack, whack.) "Take that as an illus tration—is that one?"

"Faith, masther, that's two, anyhow; but, sir, is not wanst nought nothin'? now, masther, sure there can't be less than nothin'."

"Very good, sir."

"If wanst nought be nothin', then twice nought must be somethin', for it's double what wanst nought is—see how *I'm* sthruck for *nothin'*, an' me knows it—hoo! hoo! hoo!"

"Get out, you Esculapian; bud I'll give you *somethin'* by-and-by, just to make you remimber that you know *nothin'*—off wid you to your sate, you spalpeen, you—to tell me that there can't be less than nothin', when it's well known that sporting Squire O'Canter is worth a thousand pounds less than nothin'.

"Paddy Doran, come up to your 'Intherest.' Well, Paddy, what's the intherest of a hundred pound at five per cent.? Boys, have manners, you thieves, you."

"Do you mane, masther, *per cent. per annum?*"

"To be sure I do—how do you state it!"

"I'll say, as a hundher pound is to one year, so is five per cent. per annum."

"Hum—why—what's the number of the sum, Paddy?"

"'Tis No. 84, sir." (The master steals a glance at the Key to Gough.)

"I only want to look at it in the Gough, you see, Paddy—an' how dare you give me such an answer, you big-headed dunce, you—go off

an' study it, you rascally Lilliputian—off wid you, and don't let me see your ugly mug till you know it.

"Now, *gintlemen*, for the Classics: and first for the Latinaarians—Larry Cassidy, come up wid your Asop. Larry, you're a year at Latin, an' I don't think you know Latin for *frize*, what your own coat is made of, Larry. But, in the first place, Larry, do you know what a man that taches Classics is called?"

"A schoolmasther, sir." (Whack, whack, whack.)

"Take that for your ignorance—and that to the back of it—ha! that'll tache you—to call a man that taches Classics a schoolmasther, indeed! 'Tis a Profissor of Humanity itself he is—(whack, whack, whack)—ha! you ringleader, you; you're as bad as Dick O'Connell, that no masther in the county could get any good of, in regard that he put the whole school together by the ears, wherever he'll be, though the spalpeen wouldn't stand fight himself. Hard fortune to you! to go to put such an afront upon me, an' me a Profissor of Humanity. What's Latin for pantaloons?"

"Fem—fem—femi."

"No, it's not, sir."

"Femora ——"

"Can you do it?"

"Don't strike me, sir; don't strike me, sir, an' I will."

"I say, can you do it?"

"Femorali—(whack, whack, whack)—*Ah*, sir! *ah*, sir! 'tis femorali—*ah*, sir! 'tis femorali—*ah*, sir!"

"This thratement to a Profissor of Humanity." (Drives him head over heels to his seat.) "Now, sir, maybe you'll have Latin for throwsers agin, or, by my sowl, if you don't, you must peel, and I'll tache you what a Profissor of Humanity is!

"Dan Shiel, you little starved-looking spalpeen, will you come up to your Illocution?—and a purty figure you cut at it, wid a voice like a penny thrumpet, Dan! Well, what speech have you got now, Dan, ma bouchal. Is it 'Romans, counthrymin, and lovers'?"

"No, shir; yarrah, didn't I *spake* that speech before? 'Tis wan, masther, that I'm afther *pennen* myself!"

"No, you didn't, you fairy; ah, Dan, little as you are, you take credit for more than ever you spoke, Dan, agrah; but faith, the same thrick will come agin you some time or other, avick! Go and get that speech betther: I see by your face you haven't it: off wid you, and get a patch upon your breeches; your little knees are through them, though 'tisn't by prayin' you've wore them, anyhow, you little hop-o'-my-thumb, you, wid a voice like a rat in a thrap; and yet you'll be practisin' illocution: off wid you, man alive! You little spitfire, you; if you and your schoolfellow, Dick O'Connell, had been wid the Jews whin they wanted to burn down the standin' corn of the Philistins, the divil a fox they might bother their heads about, for yees both would have carried firebrands by the hundher for them. Spake the next speech bitther—between you and Dick, you keep the school in perpetual agitation."

Sometimes the neighbouring gentry used to call into Mat's establishment, moved probably by a curiosity excited by his character and the general conduct of the school. On one occasion Squire Johnston and an English gentleman paid him rather an unexpected visit. Mat had that morning got a new scholar, the son of a dancing tailor in the neighbourhood ; and as it was reported that the son was nearly equal to the father in that accomplishment, Mat insisted on having a specimen of his skill. He was the more anxious on this point, as it would contribute to the amusement of a travelling schoolmaster, who had paid him rather a hostile visit, which Mat, who dreaded a literary challenge, feared might occasion him some trouble.

"Come up here, you little *sartor*, till we get a dacent view of you. You're a son of Ned Malone's—aren't you?"

"Yes, and of Mary Malone, my mother, too, sir."

"Why thin, that's not bad, anyhow—what's your name?"

"Dick, sir."

"Now, Dick, ma bouchal, isn't it true that you can dance a hornpike?"

"Yes, sir."

"Here, Larry Brady, take the door off the hinges, an' lay it down on the flure, till Dick Malone dances the Humours of Glynn : silence, boys, not a word ; but just keep lookin' an."

"Who'll sing, sir? for I can't be afther dancin' a step widout the music."

"Boys, which of yees 'ill sing for Dick? I say, boys, will none of yees give Dick the harmony? Well, come, Dick, I'll sing for you myself:—

Torral lol, lorral lol, lorral lol, lorral, lol—
Toldherol, lorral lol, lorral lol, lal," &c. &c.

"I say, Misther Kavanagh," said the strange master, "what angle does Dick's heel form in the second step of the treble, from the kibe on the left foot to the corner of the door forninst him?"

To this mathematical poser Mat made no reply, only sang the tune with redoubled loudness and strength, whilst little Dicky pounded the old crazy door with all his skill and alacrity. The "boys" were delighted.

"Bravo, Dick, that's a man—welt the flure—cut the buckle—murdher the clocks—rise upon suggaun, and sink upon gad—down the flure flat, foot about—keep one foot on the ground, and t'other never off it," saluted him from all parts of the house.

Sometimes he would receive a sly hint, in a feigned voice, to call for "Devil stick the Fiddler," alluding to the master. Now a squeaking voice would chime in ; by-and-by another, and so on, until the master's bass had a hundred and forty trebles, all in chorus, to the same tune.

Just at this moment the two gentlemen entered ; and, reader, you may conceive, but I cannot describe, the face which Mat (who sat with his back to the door, and did not see them until they were some time

in the house) exhibited on the occasion. There he sung *ore rotundo*, throwing forth an astounding tide of voice; whilst little Dick, a thin, pale-faced urchin, with his head, from which the hair stood erect, sunk between his hollow shoulders, was performing prodigious feats of agility.

"What's the matter? what's the matter?" said the gentlemen. "Good morning, Mr. Kavanagh?"

"————Torral lol, lol————

Oh, good——oh, good morning——gintlemen, with extrame kindness," replied Mat, rising suddenly up, but not removing his hat, although the gentlemen instantly uncovered.

"Why, thin, gentlemen," he continued, "you have caught us in our little relaxations to-day: but—hem !—I mane to give the boys a holiday for the sake of this honest and respectable gintleman in the frieze jock, who is not entirely ignorant, you persave, of litherature: and we had a small taste, gintlemen, among ourselves, of Sathurnalian licentiousness, *ut ita dicam*, in regard of—hem !—in regard of this lad here, who was dancing a hornpipe upon the door, and we, in absence of betther music, had to supply him with the harmony; but, as your honours know, gintlemen, the greatest men have bent themselves on espacial occasions."

"Make no apology, Mr. Kavanagh; it's very commendable in you to *bend* yourself by condescending to amuse your pupils."

"I beg your pardon, Squire, I can take freedoms with you; but perhaps the concomitant gintleman, your friend here, would be pleased to take my stool. Indeed, I always use a chair, but the back of it, if I may be permitted the use of a small portion of jocularity, was as frail as the fair sect: it went home yisterday to be minded. Do, sir, condescind to be *sated*. Upon my reputation, Squire, I'm sorry that I have not accommodation for you too, sir; except one of these hassocks, which, in joint considheration with the length of your honour's legs, would be, I anticipate, rather low; but *you*, sir, will honour me by taking the stool."

By considerable importunity he forced the gentleman to comply with his courtesy; but no sooner had he fixed himself upon the seat than it overturned, and stretched him, black coat and all, across a wide concavity in the floor, nearly filled up with white ashes produced from mountain turf. In a moment he was completely white on one side, and exhibited a most laughable appearance; his hat, too, was scorched and nearly burned on the turf coals. Squire Johnston laughed heartily, as did the other schoolmaster, whilst the Englishman completely lost his temper—swearing that so uncivilised an establishment was not between the poles.

"I solemnly supplicate upwards of fifty pardons," said Mat; "bad manners to it for a stool! but, your honour, it was my own defect of speculation, bekase, you see, it's *minus* a leg—a circumstance of which you warn't in a proper capacity to take cognation, as not being personally acquainted with it. I humbly supplicate upwards of fifty pardons."

The Englishman was now nettled, and determined to wreak his ill temper on Mat by turning him and his establishment into ridicule

"Isn't this, Mister —— I forget your name, sir."

"Mat Kavanagh, at your sarvice."

"Very well, my learned friend, Mr. Mat Kavanagh, isn't this precisely what is called *a hedge school?*"

"A hedge school!" replied Mat, highly offended; "my siminary a hedge school! No, sir; I scorn the *cognomen, in toto.* This, sir, is a Classical and Mathematical Siminary, under the personal superintendence of your humble servant."

"Sir," replied the other master, who till then was silent, wishing, perhaps, to *sack* Mat in presence of the gentleman, "it *is* a hedge school; and he is no scholar, but an ignoramus, whom I'd sack in three minutes, that would be ashamed of a hedge school."

"Ay," says Mat, changing his tone, and taking the cue from his friend, whose learning he dreaded, "it's just, for argument's sake, a hedge school; and, what is more, I scorn to be ashamed of it."

"And do you not teach occasionally under the hedge behind the house here?"

"Granted," replied Mat; "and now, where's your *vis consequentiæ?*"

"Yes," subjoined the other, "produce your *vis consequentiæ.*"

The Englishman himself was rather at a loss for the *vis consequentiæ*, and replied, "Why don't you live, and learn, and teach like civilised beings, and not assemble like wild asses—pardon me, my friend, for the simile—at least, like wild colts, in such clusters behind the ditches?"

"A clusther of wild coults!" said Mat; "that shows what you are; no man of classical larnin' would use such a word."

"Permit me, sir," replied the strange master, "to ax your honour one question—did you receive a *classical* education? Are you college-bred?"

"Yes," replied the Englishman; "I can reply to both in the affirmative. I'm a Cantabrigian."

"You're are *what?*" asked Mat.

"I am a Cantabrigian."

"Come, sir, you must explain yourself, if you plase. I'll take my oath that's neither a classical nor a mathematical tarm."

The gentleman smiled. "I was educated in the English College of Cambridge."

"Well," says Mat, "and maybe you would be as well off if you had picked up your larnin' in our own Thrinity; there's good picking in Thrinity for gintlemen like you, that are sober and harmless about the brains, in regard of not being overly bright."

"You talk with contempt of a hedge school," replied the other master. "Did you never hear, for all so long as you war in Cambridge, of a nate little spot in Greece, called the Groves of Academus?

Inter lucos Academi quærere verum.

What was Plato himself but a hedge schoolmaster? and, with humble

submission, it casts no slur on an Irish tacher to be compared to him, I think. You forget, also, sir, that the Dhruids taught under their oaks."

"Ay," added Mat, "and the Tree of Knowledge, too. Faith, an' if that same tree was now in being, if there wouldn't be hedge schoolmasters, there would be plinty of hedge scholars, anyhow—particularly if the fruit was well tasted."

"I believe, Millbank, you must give in," said Squire Johnston. "I think you have got the worst of it."

"Why," said Mat, "if the gintleman's not afther bein' sacked clane, I'm not here."

"Are you a mathematician," inquired Mat's friend, determined to follow up his victory; "do you know Mensuration?"

"Come, I do know Mensuration," said the Englishman, with confidence.

"And how would you find the solid contents of *a load of thorns?*" said the other.

"Ay, or how will you consther and parse me this sintince?" said Mat:—

> Regibus et clotibus solemus stopere windous,
> Nos numerus sumus fruges consumere nati,
> Stercora flat stire rara terra-tantaro bungo."

"Aisy, Mister Kavanagh," replied the other, "let the Cantabrigian resolve the one I propounded him first."

"And let the Cantabrigian then take up mine," said Mat: "and if he can expound it I'll give him a dozen more to bring home in his pocket, for the Cambridge folk to crack after their dinner along wid their nuts."

"Can you do the 'Snail'?" inquired the stranger.

"Or 'A and B on opposite sides of a wood,' without the Key?" said Mat.

"Maybe," said the stranger, who threw off the frieze jock, and exhibited a muscular frame of great power, cased in an old black coat —"maybe the gintleman would like to get a small taste of the '*Scuffle.*'"

"Not at all," replied the Englishman; "devil the least curiosity I have for it—I assure you I have not. What the deuce do they mean, Johnston? I hope you have influence over them."

"Hand me down that cudgel, Jack Brady, till I show the gintleman the 'Snail' and the 'Maypole,'" said Mat.

"Never mind, my lad; never mind, Mr.——a——Mr. Kavanagh. I give up the contest, I resign you the palm, gentlemen. The hedge school has beaten Cambridge hollow."

"One poser more, before you go, sir," said Mat. "Can you give Latin for a *game-egg* in two words?"

"Eh, a game egg? No, by my honour I cannot—gentlemen, I yield."

"Ay, I thought so," replied Mat; "bring it home to Cam-bridge,

anyhow, and let them chew their cuds upon it, you persave; and, by the sowl of Newton, it will puzzle the whole establishment, or my name's not Kavanagh."

"It will, I am convinced," replied the gentleman, eyeing the herculean frame of the strange teacher, and the substantial cudgel in Mat's hand; "it will, undoubtedly. But who is this most miserable naked lad here, Mr. Kavanagh?"

"Why, sir," replied Mat, with his broad Milesian face expanding with a forthcoming joke, "he is, sir, in a sartin and especial particularity, a namesake of your own."

"How is that, Mr. Kevanagh?"

"My name's not *Ke*vanagh," replied Mat, "but *Ka*vanagh; the Irish A for ever!"

"Well, but how is the lad a namesake of mine?" said the Englishman.

"Bekase, you see, he's a *poor scholar*, sir," replied Mat; "an' hope your honour will pardon me for the facetiousness—

Quid vetat ridentem dicere verum?

as Horace says to Mæcenas, on the first of the Sathirs?"

"There, Mr. Kavanagh, is the price of a suit of clothes for him."

"Michael, will you rise up, sir, and make the gintleman a bow? he has given you the price of a shoot of clothes, ma bouchal."

Michael came up with a thousand rags dangling about him; and, catching his forelock, bobbed down his head after the usual manner, saying, "Musha yarrah, long life to your honour every day you rise, an' the Lord grant your sowl a short stay in purgatory, wishin' ye, at the same time, a happy death aftherwards!"

The gentlemen could not stand this, but laughed so heartily that the argument was fairly knocked up.

It appeared, however, that Squire Johnston did not visit Mat's school from mere curiosity.

"Mr. Kavanagh," said he, "I would be glad to have a little private conversation with you, and will thank you to walk down the road a little with this gentleman and me."

When the gentlemen and Mat had gone ten or fifteen yards from the school door, the Englishman heard himself congratulated in the following phrases:—

"How do you feel afther bein' *sacked*, gintleman? The masther sacked you! You're a purty scholar! It's not you, Mr. Johnston, it's the other. You'll come to argue agin, will you? Where's your head now? Bah! Come back till we put the *soogaun*[1] about your neck. Bah! You must go to school to Cam-bridge agin, before you can argue an Irisher! Look at the figure he cuts! Why duv ye put the one foot past the other, when ye walk, for? Bah! Dunce!!"

[1] The soogaun was a collar of straw which was put round the necks of the dunces, who were then placed at the door, that their disgrace might be as public as possible.

"Well, boys, never heed yees for that," shouted Mat; "never fear but I'll castigate yees, ye spalpeen villains, as soon as I go back. Sir," said Mat, "I supplicate upwards of fifty pardons. I assure you, sir, I'll give them a most inordinate castigation for their want of respectability."

"What's the Greek for tobaccy?" they continued, "or for Lar y O'Toole? or for bletherum skite? How many beans make five? What's Latin for poteen and flummery! You a mathemathitician! Could you measure a snail's horn? How does your hat stay up and nothing undher it? Will you fight Barny Farrell wid one hand tied? I'd lick you myself! What's Greek for gosther?" with many other expressions of a similar stamp.

"Sir," said Mat, "lave the justice of this in my hands. By the sowl of Newton, your own counthryman, ould Isaac, I'll flog the marrow out of them."

"You have heard, Mr. Kavanagh," continued Mr. Johnston, as they went along, "of the burning of Moore's stables and horses, the night before last. The fact is that the magistrates of the county are endeavouring to get the incendiaries, and would render a service to any person capable, either directly or indirectly, of facilitating that object, or stumbling on a clue to the transaction."

"And how could I do you a sarvice in it, sir?" inquired Mat.

"Why," replied Mr. Johnston, "from the children. If you could sift them in an indirect way, so as, without suspicion, to ascertain the absence of a brother or so on that particular night, I might have it in my power to serve you, Mr. Kavanagh. There will be a large reward offered to-morrow, besides."

"Oh, damn the penny of the reward ever I'd finger, even if I knew the whole conflagration," said Mat; "but lave the siftin' of the children wid myself, and if I can get anything out of them, you'll hear from me; but your honour must keep a close mouth, or you might have occasion to lend me the money for my own funeral, some o' these days. Good morning, gintlemen."

The gentlemen departed.

"May the most ornamental kind of hard fortune pursue you every day you rise, you desavin' villain, that would have me turn *informer*, bekase your brother-in-law, rack-rintin' Moore's stable and horses were burnt; but I'd see you and all your breed in the flames o' hell first." Such was Mat's soliloquy as he entered the school on his return.

"Now, boys, I'm afther giving yees to-day and to-morrow for a holiday: to-morrow we will have our Gregory: a fine faste, plinty of poteen, and a fiddle; and you will tell your brothers and sisters to come in the evening to the dance. You must bring plinty of bacon, hung beef, and fowls, bread and cabbage—not forgetting the phaties, and sixpence a head for the *crathur*, boys, wont yees?"

The next day, of course, was one of festivity; every boy brought, in fact, as much as would serve six; but the surplus gave Mat some good dinners for three months to come. This feast was always held upon

St. Gregory's day, from which circumstance it had its name. The pupils were at liberty, for that day, to conduct themselves as they pleased: and the consequence was that they became generally intoxicated, and were brought home in that state to their parents. If the children of two opposite parties chanced to be at the same school, they usually had a fight, of which the master was compelled to feign ignorance; for if he identified himself with either faction, his residence in the neighbourhood would be short. In other districts, where Protestant schools were in existence, a battle-royal commonly took place between the opposite establishments, in some field lying halfway between them. This has often occurred.

Everyone must necessarily be acquainted with the ceremony of *barring out*. This took place at Easter and Christmas. The master was brought or sent out on some fool's errand, the door shut and barricaded, and the pedagogue excluded until a certain term of vacation was extorted. With this, however, the master never complied until all his efforts at forcing an entrance were found to be ineffectual; because, if he succeeded in getting in, they not only had no claim to a long vacation, but were liable to be corrected. The schoolmaster had also, generally, the clerkship of the parish; an office, however, which, in the country parts of Ireland, is without any kind of salary beyond what results from the patronage of the priest; a matter of serious moment to a teacher, who, should he incur his reverence's displeasure, would be immediately driven out of the parish. The master, therefore, was always tyrannical and insolent to the people in proportion as he stood high in the estimation of the priest. He was also the master of ceremonies at all wakes and funerals, and usually sat among a crowd of the village sages, engaged in exhibiting his own learning, and in recounting the number of his religious and literary disputations.

One day, soon after the visit of the gentlemen above mentioned, two strange men came into Mat's establishment — rather, as Mat thought, in an unceremonious manner.

"Is your name Matthew Kavanagh?" said one of them.

"That is indeed the name that's upon me," said Mat, with rather an infirm voice, whilst his face got pale as ashes.

"Well," said the fellow, "we'll jist trouble you to walk with us a bit."

"How far, with submission, are yees goin' to bring me?" said Mat.

"Do you know Johnny Short's hotel?"[1]

"My curse upon you, Findramore," exclaimed Mat, in a paroxysm of anguish, "every day you rise! but your breath's unlucky to a schoolmasther; and it's no lie what was often said, that no schoolmasther ever thruv in you, but something ill came over him."

"Don't curse the town, man alive," said the constable, "but curse your own ignorance and folly; any way, I wouldn't stand in your coat for the wealth of the three kingdoms. You'll undoubtedly swing,

[1] The county gaol.

unless you turn king's evidence. It's about Moore's business, Mr. Kavanagh."

"Dang the that I'd do, even if I knew anything about it; but, God be praised for it, I can set them all at defiance—that I'm sure of. Gintlemen, innocence is a jewel."

"But Barny Brady, that keeps the shebeen house—you know *him*—is of another opinion. You and some of the Findramore boys took a sup in Barny's on a sartin night?"

"Ay, did we, on many a night, and will agin, plase Providence—no harm in takin' a sup, anyhow—by the same token, that maybe you and yer friend here would have a drop of rale stuff, as a thrate from me?"

"I know a thrick worth two of that," said the man; "I thank ye kindly, Mr. Kavanagh."

One Tuesday morning, about six weeks after this event, the largest crowd ever remembered in that neighbourhood was assembled at Findramore Hill, whereon had been erected a certain wooden machine, —yclept a gallows. A little after the hour of eleven o'clock two carts were descried winding slowly down a slope on the southern side of the town and church, which I have already mentioned as terminating the view along the level road north of the hill. As soon as they were observed, a low, suppressed ejaculation of horror ran through the crowd, painfully perceptible to the ear—in the expression of ten thousand murmurs all blending into one deep groan—and to the eye, by a simultaneous motion that ran through the crowd like an electric shock. The place of execution was surrounded by a strong detachment of military; and the carts that conveyed the convicts were also strongly guarded.

As the prisoners approached the fatal spot, which was within sight of the place where the outrage had been perpetrated, the shrieks and lamentations of their relations and acquaintances were appalling indeed. Fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, cousins, and all persons to the most remote degree of kindred and acquaintanceship, were present—all excited by the alternate expression of grief and low-breathed vows of retaliation; not only relations, but all who were connected with them by the bonds of their desperate and illegal oaths. Every eye, in fact, corruscated with a wild and savage fire, that shot from under brows knit in a spirit that seemed to cry out blood, vengeance—blood, vengeance. The expression was truly awful, and what rendered it more terrific was the writhing reflection that numbers and physical force were unavailing against a comparatively small body of armed troops. This condensed the fiery impulse of the moment into an expression of subdued rage, that really shot like livid gleams from their visages.

At length the carts stopped under the gallows; and, after a short interval spent in devotional exercise, three of the culprits ascended the platform, who, after recommending themselves to God, and avowing their innocence, although the clearest possible evidence of guilt had been brought against them, were launched into another life,

among the shrieks and groans of the multitude. The other three then ascended; two of them either declined or had not strength to address the assembly. The third advanced to the edge of the boards—*it was Mat*. After two or three efforts to speak, in which he was unsuccessful from bodily weakness, he at length addressed them as follows :—

"My friends and good people—In hopes that you may be all able to demonstrate the last proposition laid down by a dying man, I undertake to address you before I depart to that world where Euclid, De Carts, and many other larned men are gone before me. There is nothing in all philosophy more true than that, as the multiplication fable says, 'two and two makes four;' but it is equally veracious and worthy of credit that if you do not abnegate this system that you work the common rules of your proceedings by—if you don't become loyal men, and give up burnin' and murdherin', the solution of it will be found on the gallows. I acknowledge myself to be guilty, for not separatin' myself clane from yees; we have been all guilty, and may God forgive thim that jist now departed wid a lie in their mouth."

Here he was interrupted by a volley of execrations and curses, mingled with "stag," "informer," "thraithor to the thrue cause!" which, for some time, compelled him to be silent.

"You may curse," continued Mat; "but it's too late now to abscond the truth—the '*sum*' of my wickedness and folly is worked out, and you see the '*answer*.' God forgive me, many a young crathur I enticed into the *Ribbon* business, and now it's to ind in *Hemp*! Obey the law; or, if you don't, you'll find it a *lex talionis*—the construction of which is, that if a man burns or murdhers, he won't miss hanging; take warning by me—by us all; for, although I take God to witness that I was not at the perpetration of the crime that I'm to be suspinded for, yet I often connived, when I might have superseded the carrying of such intintions into effectuality. I die in pace wid all the world, save an' except the Findramore people, whom may the maledictionary execration of a dying man follow into eternal infinity! My manuscription of conic sections——" Here an extraordinary buzz commenced among the crowd, which rose gradually into a shout of wild, astounding exultation. The sheriff followed the eyes of the multitude, and perceived a horseman dashing with breathless fury up towards the scene of execution. He carried and waved a white handkerchief on the end of a rod, and made signals with his hat to stop the execution. He arrived, and brought a full pardon for Mat, and a commutation of sentence to transportation for life for the other two. What became of Mat I know not; but in Findramore he never dared to appear, as certain death would have been the consequence of his not dying *game*. With respect to Barny Brady, who kept the shebeen, and was the principal evidence against those who were concerned in this outrage, he was compelled to enact an *extempore* death in less than a month afterwards; having been found dead, with a slip of paper in his mouth, inscribed, "*This is the fate of all Informers.*"

THE STATION.

OUR readers are to suppose the Reverend Philemy M'Guirk, parish priest of Tir-neer, to be standing upon the altar of the chapel, facing the congregation, after having gone through the canon of the mass; and having nothing more of the service to perform than the usual prayers with which he closes the ceremony.

"Take notice, that the Stations for the following week will be held as follows:—

"*On Monday, in Jack Gallagher's, of Corraghnamoddagh.* Are you there, Jack?"

"To the fore, yer reverence."

"Why, then, Jack, there's something ominous—something auspicious—to happen, or we wouldn't have you here; for it's very seldom that you make part or parcel of the *present* congregation; seldom are you here, Jack, it must be confessed: however, you know the old classical proverb, or if *you* don't, *I* do, which will just answer as well —*Non semper ridit Apollo*—it's not every day *Manus* kills a bullock; so, as you *are* here, be prepared for us on Monday."

"Never fear, yer reverence, never fear; I think you ought to know that the grazin' at Corraghnamoddagh's not bad."

"To do you justice, Jack, the mutton was always good with you, only if you would get it better killed it would be an improvement."

"Very well, yer reverence, I'll do it."

"*On Tuesday, in Peter Murtagh's, of the Crooked Commons.* Are you there, Peter?"

"Here, yer reverence."

"Indeed, Peter, I might know you are here; and I wish that a great many of *my* flock would take example by you: if they did, I wouldn't be so far behind in getting in my *dues.* Well, Peter, I suppose you know that this is Michaelmas?"

"So fat, yer reverence, that they're not able to wag; but, any way, Katty has them marked for you—two fine young crathurs, only last year's fowl, and the ducks isn't a taste behind them—she's crammin' them this month past."

"I believe you, Peter, and I would take your word for more than the condition of the geese—remember me to Katty, Peter."

"*On Wednesday, in Parrah More Slevin's, of Mullaghfadh.* Are you there, Parrah More?"—No answer. "Parrah More Slevin?"—Silence. "Parrah More Slevin, of Mullaghfadh?"—No reply. "Dan Fagan?"

"Present, sir."

"Do you know what keeps that reprobate from mass?"

"I bleeve he's takin' advantage, sir, of the frast, to get in his praties

to-day, in respect of the bad footin', sir, for the horses in the bog when there's not a frast. Anyhow, betune that and a bit of a sore head that he got, yer reverence, on Thursday last in takin' part wid the O'Scallaghans agin the Bradys, I believe he had to stay away to-day."

"On the Sabbath day, too, without my leave! Well, tell him from me that I'll make an example of him to the whole parish, if he doesn't attend mass better. Will the Bradys and the O'Scallaghans never be done with their quarrelling? I protest, if they don't live like Christians I'll read them out from the altar. Will you tell Parrah More that I'll hold a station in his house on next Wednesday?"

"I will, sir; I will, yer reverence."

"*On Thursday, in Phaddhy Sheemus Phaddhy's, of the Esker.* Are you there, Phaddhy?"

"Wid the help of God, I'm here, sir."

"Well, Phaddhy, how is yer son Briney, that's at the Latin? I hope he's coming on well at it?"

"Why, sir, he's not more nor a year and a half at it yet, and he's got more books amost nor he can carry—he'll break me buying books for him."

"Well, that's a good sign, Phaddhy, but why don't you bring him to me till I examine him?"

"Why, never a one of me can get him to go, sir, he's so much afeard of your reverence."

"Well, Phaddhy, we were once modest and bashful ourselves, and I'm glad to hear that he's afraid of his *clargy;* but let him be prepared for me on Thursday, and maybe I'll let him know something he never heard before; I'll give him a Maynooth touch."

"Do you hear that, Briney," said the father, aside, to the son, who knelt at his knee—"ye must give up yer hurling and idling now, you see. Thank yer reverence, thank you, docthor."

"*On Friday, in Barny O'Darby's,* alias *Barny Butter's.* Are you there, Barny?"

"All that's left of me is here, sir."

"Well, Barny, how is the butter trade this season?"

"It's a little on the rise now, sir; in a month or so I'm expecting it will be brisk enough; *Boney,* sir, is doing that much for us, any way."

"Ay, and Barny, he'll do more than that for us: God prosper *him* at all events—I only hope the time's coming, Barny, when everyone will be able to eat his own butter and his own beef, too."

"God send it, sir."

"Well, Barny, I didn't hear from your brother Ned these two or three months; what has become of him?"

"Ah, yer reverence, Pentland done him up."

"What! the gauger?"

"He did, the thief; but maybe he'll sup sorrow for it afore he's much oulder."

"And who do you think informed, Barny?"

"Oh, I only wish we knew that, sir."

"I wish *I* knew it; and if I thought any miscreant her would

become an *informer* I'd make an example of him. Well, Barny, on Friday next; but I suppose Ned has a drop still—eh, Barny?"

"Why, sir, we'll be apt to have something stronger nor wather, anyhow."

"Very well, Barny: your family was always a decent and spirited family, I'll say that for them: but tell me, Barny, did you begin to *dam* the river yet?[1] I think the trouts and eels are running by this time."

"The creels are made, yer reverence, though we did not set them yet; but on Tuesday night, sir, wid the help o' God, we'll be ready."

"You can *corn* the trouts, Barny, and the eels too; but, should you catch nothing, go to Pat Hartigan, Captain Sloethorn's gamekeeper, and if you tell him it's for me, he'll drag you a batch out of the fish-pond."

"Ah! then, yer reverence, it's 'imself that 'ill do that wid a heart an' a half."

Such was the conversation which took place between the Reverend Philemy M'Guirk and those of his parishioners in whose houses he had appointed to hold a series of stations for the week ensuing the Sunday laid in this our account of that hitherto undescribed portion of the Romish discipline.

Now, the reader is to understand that a station in this sense differs from a station made to any peculiar spot remarkable for local sanctity. There, a station means the performance of a pilgrimage to a certain place, under peculiar circumstances, and the going through a stated number of prayers and other penitential ceremonies, for the purpose of wiping out sin in this life, or of relieving the soul of some relation from the pains of purgatory in the other; here, it simply means the coming of the parish priest and his curate to some house in the townland, on a day publicly announced from the altar for that purpose on the preceding Sabbath.

This is done to give those who live within the district in which the station is held an opportunity of *coming to their duty*, as frequenting the ordinance of confession is emphatically called. Those who attend confession in this manner once a year are considered *merely* to have done their duty; it is expected, however, that they should *approach the tribunal*, as it is termed, at least twice during that period—that is, at the two great feasts of Christmas and Easter. The observance or omission of this rite among Roman Catholics establishes, in a great degree, the nature of individual character. The man who frequents his duty will seldom be pronounced a bad man, let his conduct and his principles be what they may in other respects; and he who neglects it is looked upon by those who attend it as in a state little short of reprobation, no matter how correct or religious he may be, either in public or private life.

[1] It is usual among the peasantry to form, about Michaelmas, small artificial cascades, called *dams*, under which they place long deep wicker creels, shaped like inverted cones, for the purpose of securing the fish that are now on their return to the large rivers, after having deposited their spawn in the higher and remoter streams. It is surprising what a number of fish, particularly of eels, are caught in this manner—sometimes from one barrel to three in the course of a single night!

When the "giving out" of the stations was over, and a few more jests were broken by his reverence, to which the congregation paid the tribute of a general and uproarious laugh, he turned round on his heel, and with the greatest *sang froid* resumed the performance of the mass, whilst his "flock" began to finger their beads with faces as grave as if nothing of the kind had occurred. When mass was finished, and the holy water sprinkled upon the people, out of a tub carried by the mass-server through the chapel for that purpose, the priest gave them a fine Latin benediction, and they dispersed.

Now, of the four individuals in whose houses the "stations" were appointed to be held, we will select *Phaddhy Sheemus Phaddhy* for our purpose; and this we do because it was the first time in which a station was ever kept in his house, and consequently *Phaddhy* and his wife had to undergo the initiatory ceremony of entertaining Father *Philemy* and his curate, the Reverend *Con M'Coul*, at dinner.

Phaddhy Sheemus Phaddhy had been, until a short time before the period in question, a very poor man; but a little previous to that event a brother of his, who had no children, died very rich—that is, for a farmer—and left him his property, or, at least, the greater part of it. While Phaddhy was poor it was surprising what little notice he excited from his reverence; in fact, I have heard him acknowledge that during all the days of his poverty he never got a nod of recognition or kindness from Father Philemy, although he sometimes did, he said, from Father Con, his curate, who honoured him on two occasions so far as to challenge him to a bout at throwing the shoulder-stone, and once to a leaping match, at both of which exercises Father Con, but for the superior power of Phaddhy, had been unrivalled.

"It was an unlucky day to him," said Phaddhy, "that he went to challenge me, at all at all; for I was the only man that ever bate him, and he wasn't able to hould up his head in the parish for many a day afther."

As soon, however, as Phaddy became a man of substance one would almost think that there had been a secret relationship between his good fortune and Father Philemy's memory; for, on their first meeting after Phaddhy's getting the property, the latter shook him most cordially by the hand—a proof that, had not his recollection been as much improved as Phaddhy's circumstances, he could by no means have remembered him; but this is a failing in the memory of many, as well as in that of Father Philemy. Phaddhy, however, *was no Donnell*, to use his own expression, and saw as far into a deal board as another man.

"And so, Phaddhy," said the priest, "how are all your family?—six you have, I think?"

"Four, yer rev'rence, only four," said Phaddhy, winking at Tim Dillon, his neighbour, who happened to be present—"three boys an' one girl."

"Bless my soul, and so it is, indeed, Phaddhy, and I ought to know it; and how is your wife Sarah?—I mean, I hope Mrs. Sheemus Phaddhy is well: by-the-by, is that old complaint of her's gone yet?—

a pain in the stomach, I think it was, that used to trouble her—I hope in God, Phaddhy, she's getting over it, poor thing. Indeed, I remember telling her, last Easter, when she came to her duty, to eat oaten bread and butter with water-grass every morning, *fasting;* it cured myself of the same complaint."

"Why, thin, I'm very much obliged to your rev'rence for purscribin' for her," replied Phaddhy; "for, sure enough, she has neither pain nor ache at the present time, for the best rason in the world, docthor that she'll be dead jist seven years, if God spares yer rev'rence an' myself till to-morrow fortnight, about five o'clock in the mornin'."

This was more than Father Philemy could stand with a good conscience, so, after getting himself out of the dilemma as well as he could, he shook Phaddhy again very cordially by the hand, saying, "Well, good-bye, Phaddhy, and God be good to poor Sarah's soul—I now remember her funeral, sure enough, and a dacent one it was, for indeed she was a woman that had everybody's good word—and, between you and me, she made a happy death, that's as far as we can judge here; for, after all, there may be danger, Phaddhy, there may be danger, you understand—however, it's your own business, and your duty, too, to think of that; but I believe you're not the man that would be apt to forget her."

"Phaddhy, ye thief o' the world," said Tim Dillon, when Father Philemy was gone, "there's no comin' up to ye; how could you make sich a fool of his rev'rence as to tell 'im that Katty was dead, an' that you had ony four childher, an' you has eleven o' them, an' the wife in good health?"

"Why, jist, Tim," replied Phaddhy, with his usual shrewdness, "to tache his rev'rence himself to practise truth a little: if he didn't know that I got the stockin' of guineas and the Lisnaskey farm by my brother Barny's death, div ye think that he'd notish me at all at all?—not himself, avick; an' maybe he won't be afther comin' round to me for a sack of my best oats, instead of the bushel I used to give him, and houldin' a couple of stations wid me every year."

"But won't he go mad when he hears you tould him nothing but lies?"

"Not now, Tim," answered Phaddhy—"not now; thank God, I'm not a poor man, an' he'll keep his temper. I'll warrant you the horsewhip won't be up now, although, afore this, I wouldn't say but it might—though the poorest day I ever was, id's myself that wouldn't let a priest or friar lay a horsewhip to my back, an' that *you* know, Tim."

Phaddhy's sagacity, however, was correct; for, a short time after this conversation, Father Philemy, when collecting his oats, gave him a call, laughed heartily at the sham account of Katty's death, examined young Briney in his Latin, who was called after his uncle—pronounced him very *cute*, and likely to become a great scholar—promised his interest with the bishop to get him into Maynooth, and left the family, after having shaken hands with, and stroked down the heads of, all the children.

When Phaddhy, on the Sunday in question, heard the public notice given of the station about to be held in his house, notwithstanding his

correct knowledge of Father Philemy's character, on which he looked with a competent portion of contempt, he felt a warmth of pride about his heart that arose from the honour of having a station, and of entertaining the clergy in their official capacity, under his own roof and at his own expense, that gave him, he thought, a personal consequence which even the "stockin' of guineas" and the Linsaskey farm were unable, of themselves, to confer upon him. He did enjoy, 'tis true, a very fair proportion of happiness on succeeding to his brother's property: but this would be a triumph over the envious and ill-natured remarks which several of his neighbours and distant relations had taken the liberty of indulging in against him on the occasion of his good fortune. He left the chapel, therefore, in good spirits, whilst Briney, on the contrary, hung a lip of more melancholy pendency than usual, in dread apprehension of the examination that he expected to be inflicted on him by his reverence at the station.

Before I introduce the conversation which took place between Phaddhy and Briney as they went home on the subject of this literary ordeal, I must observe that there is a custom, hereditary in some Irish families, of calling fathers by their *Christian* names instead of by the usual appellation of "father." This usage was observed, not only by Phaddhy and his son, but by all the Phaddhys of that family generally. Their surname was *Doran*, but in consequence of the great numbers in that part of the country who bore the same name, it was necessary, as of old, to distinguish the several branches of it by the Christian names of their fathers and grandfathers, and sometimes this distinction went as far back as the great grandfather. For instance—Phaddhy Sheemus Phaddhy, meant Phaddhy the son of Sheemus, the son of Phaddhy: and his son, Briney, was called Brian Phaddhy Sheemus Phaddhy, or *anglicè*, Bernard the son of Patrick, the son of James, the son of Patrick. But the custom of children calling fathers, in a *vivâ voce* manner, by their Christian names, was independent of the other more general usage of the patronymic.

"Well, Briney," said Phaddhy, as the father and son returned home, cheek by jowl, from the chapel, "I suppose Father Philemy will go very deep in the Latin wid ye on Thursday; do ye think ye'll be able to answer him?"

"Why, Phaddhy," replied Briney, "how could *I* be able to answer a clargy?—doesn't he know all the languages, and I'm only in the *Fibulæ Æsiopii* yet."

"Is that Latin or Greek, Briney?"

"It's Latin, Phaddhy."

"And what's the translation of that?"

"It signifies the Fables of Æsiopius."

"Bliss my sowl! and, Briney, did ye consther that out of yer own head?"

"Hogh! that's little of it. If ye war to hear me consther *Gallus Gallinaceus*, a dunghill cock!"

"And, Briney, are ye in Greek at all yet?"

"No, Phaddhy, I'll not be in Greek till I'm in Virgil and Horace, and thin I'll be near finished."

"And how long will it be till that, Briney?"

"Why, Phaddhy, ye know I'm only a year and a half at the Latin and in two years more I'll be in the Greek?"

"Do ye think will ye ever be as larned as Father Philemy, Briney?"

"Don't ye know whin I'm a clargy I will; but I'm only a *lignum sacerdotis* yet, Phaddhy."

"What's *ligdum saucerdoatis*, Briney?"

"A block of a priest, Phaddhy."

"Now, Briney, I suppose Father Philemy knows everything?"

"Ay, to be sure he does; all the languages that's spoken through the world, Phaddhy."

"And must all the priests know them, Briney?—how many are they?"

"Seven—sartinly, every priest must know them, or how could they lay the divil, if he'd spake to them in a tongue they couldn't understand, Phaddhy?"

"Ah, I declare, Briney, I see it now; ony for that, poor Father Philip, the heavens be his bed, wouldn't be able to lay ould Warnock, that haunted Squire Sloethorn's stables."

"Is that when the two horses was stole, Phaddhy?"

"The very time, Briney; but God be thanked, Father Philip settled him to the day of judgment."

"And where did he put him, Phaddy?"

"Why, he wanted to be put anundher the hearth-stone; but Father Philip made him walk away with himself into a thumb-bottle, and tied a stone to it, and then sent him to where he got a cooling, the thief, at the bottom of the lough behind the house."

"Well, I'll tell you what I'm thinking I'll be apt to do, Phaddy, when I'm a clargy."

"And what is that, Briney?"

"Why, I'll——but, Phaddhy, don't be talking of this, bekase, if it should come to be known, I might get my brains knocked out by some of the heretics."

"Never fear, Briney; there's no danger of *that*. But what is it?"

"Why, I'll translate all the Protestants into asses, and then we'll get our hands *red* of them altogether."

"Well, that flogs for cuteness, and it's a wondher the clargy[1] doesn't do it, and them has the power; for 'twould give us pace entirely. But, Briney, will you spake in Latin to Father Philemy on Thursday?"

"To tell you the thruth, Phaddhy, I would rather he wouldn't examine me this bout, at all at all."

"Ay, but you know we couldn't go agin him, Briney, bekase he

[1] I have no hesitation in asserting that the bulk of the Irish peasantry really believe that the Romish priests have this power.

promised to get you into the college. Will you spake some Latin now till I hear you?"

"Hem!—*Verbum personaley cohairit cum nomnatibo numbera at parsona at nuqumam sera yeast at bonis moras voia.*"

"Bless my heart!—and, Briney, where's that taken from?"

"From Syntax, Phaddhy."

"And who *was* Shintax—do you know, Briney?"

"He was a Roman, Phaddhy, bekase there's a Latin prayer in the beginning of the book."

"Ay, was he?—a priest, I'll warrant him. Well, Briney, do you mind yer Latin, and get on wid your larnin', and when you grow up you'll have a pair of boots, and a horse of your own (and a good broad-cloth black coat, too) to ride on, every bit as good as father Philemy's, and maybe betther nor Father Con's."

From this point, which usually wound up these colloquies between the father and son, the conversation usually diverged into the more spacious fields of science; so that, by the time they reached home, Briney had probably given the father a learned dissertation upon the elevation of the clouds above the earth, and told him within how many thousand miles they approached it at their nearest point of approximation.

"Katty," said Phaddhy, when he got home, "we're to have a station here on Thursday next; 'twas given out from the altar to-day by Father Philemy."

"Oh, wurrah, wurrah!" exclaimed Katty, overwhelmed at the consciousness of her own incapacity to get up a dinner in sufficient style for such guests—"wurrah, wurrah! Phaddhy, ahagur, what on the livin' earth will we do, at all at all! Why, we'll never be able to manage it."

"Arrah why, Katty, woman; what do they want but their skinful to eat and dhrink, and I'm sure we're able to allow them that, any way!"

"Arrah, bad manners to me, but you're enough to vex a saint—'their skinful to eat and dhrink!'—you common crathur, you, to spake that-a-way of the clargy, as if it was ourselves or the labourers you war spaking of."

"Ay, and aren't we every bit as good as they are, if you go to that?—haven't we sowls to be saved as well as themselves?"

"'As good as they are!' As good as the clargy!! *Manum a yea, agus a wurrah!*[1]—listen to what he says! Phaddhy, take care of yourself. You've got rich now; but, for all that, take care of yourself. You had better not bring the priest's ill-will or his bad heart upon us. You know they never thruv that had it; and maybe it's a short time your riches might stay wid you, or maybe it's a short time you might stay wid them: at any rate, God forgive you, and I hope He will, for makin' use of sich unsanctified words to your lawful clargy."

"Well, but what do you intind to do? or what do you think of getting for them?" inquired Phaddy.

[1] My soul to God and the Virgin!

"Indeed, it's very little matther what I get for them, or what I'll do either—sorrow one of myself cares almost: for a man in his senses, that ought to know better, to make use of such low language about the blessed and holy crathurs, that hasn't a stain of sin about them no more than the child unborn!"

'So *you* think?"

"So *I* think! ay, and it would be betther for you that you thought so, too; but ye don't know what's before ye yet, Phaddhy; and now, take warnin' in time, and mend your life."

"Why, what do you see wrong in my life? Am I a drunkard? am I lazy? did ever I neglect my business? was I ever bad to you or to the childher? didn't I always give yees yer fill to ate, and kept yees as well clad as yer neighbours that was richer? don't I go on my knees, too, every night and morning?"

"That's true enough; but what signifies it all? When did ye cross a priest's foot to go to your duty? Not for the last five years, Phaddhy—not since poor Torly (God be good to him) died of the mazles, and that'll be five years a fortnight before Christmas."

"And what are you the betther of all yer confessions? did they ever mend yer temper, avourneen? No, indeed, Katty, but you're ten times worse tempered coming back from the priest than before ye go to him."

"Oh, Phaddhy! Phaddhy! God look down upon you this day, or any man that's in yer hardened state—I see there's no use in spaking to you, for you'll still be the ould cut."

"Ay, will I; so you may as well give up talking about it. Arrah, woman!" said Phaddhy, raising his voice, "who does it ever make betther—show me a man now, in all the neighbourhood, that's a pin-point the holier of it? Isn't there Jemmy Shields, that goes to *his duty* wanst a month, malivogues his wife and family this minute, and then claps them to a Rosary the next; but the ould boy's a thrifle to him of a fast day, afther coming from the priest. Betune ourselves, Katty, you're not much behind him."

Katty made no reply to this, but turned up her eyes, and crossed herself, at the wickedness of her unmanageable husband.

"Well, Briney," said she, turning abruptly to the son, "don't take patthern by that man, if you expect to do any good; let him be a warning to you to mind yer duty, and respect yer clargy—and prepare yerself, now that I think of it, to go to Father Philemy or Father Con on Thursday: but don't be said or led by that man, for I'm sure I dunno how he intinds to face the man above when he laves this world—and to keep from his duty, and to spake of his clargy as he does!"

There are few men without their weak sides. Phaddhy, although the priests were never very much his favourites, was determined to give what he himself called *a let-out* on this occasion, simply to show his ill-natured neighbours that, notwithstanding their unfriendly remarks, he knew "what it was to be dacent," as well as his betters and Katty seconded him in his resolution, from her profound veneration for the *clargy*.

Every preparation was accordingly entered into, and every plan

adopted, that could possibly be twisted into a capability of contributing to the entertainment of Fathers Philemy and Con.

One of those large round stercoraceous nosegays, that, like many other wholesome plants, make up by odour what is wanting in floral beauty, and which lay rather too *contagious*, as Phaddhy expressed it, to the door of his house, was transplanted by about half a dozen labourers and as many barrows, in the course of a day or two, to a bed some yards distant from the spot of its first growth ; because, without any reference whatsoever to the nasal sense, it was considered that it might be rather an *eye-sore* to their reverences on approaching the door. Several concave inequalities, which constant attrition had worn in the earthen floor of the kitchen, were filled up with blue clay, brought on a car from the bank of a neighbouring river for the purpose. The dresser, chairs, tables, pots, and pans all underwent a rigour of discipline, as if some remarkable event was about to occur ; nothing less, it must be supposed, than a complete domestic revolution, and a new state of things. Phaddhy himself cut two or three large furze bushes, and, sticking them on the end of a pitchfork, attempted to sweep down the chimney. For this purpose he mounted on the back of a chair, that he might be able to reach the top with more ease ; but, in order that his footing might be firm, he made one of the servant-men sit upon the chair to keep it steady during the operation. Unfortunately, however, it so happened that this man was needed to assist in removing a meal chest to another part of the house ; this was under Katty's superintendence, who, seeing the fellow sit rather more at his ease than she thought the hurry and importance of the occasion permitted, called him, with a little of her usual sharpness and energy, to assist in removing the chest. For some reason or other, which it is not necessary to mention here, the fellow bounced from his seat in obedience to the shrill tones of Katty, and the next moment Phaddhy (who was in a state of abstraction in the chimney, and totally unconscious of what was going forward below) made a descent decidedly contrary to the nature of that which most aspirants would be inclined to relish. A severe stun, however, was the most serious injury he received on his own part, and several round oaths, with a good drubbing, fell to the servant ; but unluckily he left the furze bush behind him in the highest and narrowest part of the chimney ; and were it not that an active fellow succeeded in dragging it up from the outside of the roof, the chimney ran considerable risk, as Katty said, of being choked.

But along with the lustration which every fixture within the house was obliged to undergo, it was necessary that all the youngsters should get new clothes ; and for this purpose Jemmy Lynch, the tailor, with his two journeymen and three apprentices, were sent for in all haste, that he might fit Phaddhy and each of his six sons in suits, from a piece of home-made frieze, which Katty did not intend to break up till "towarst Christmas."

A station is no common event, and accordingly the web was cut up, and the tailor left a wedding-suit half-made, belonging to Edy Dolan, a thin old bachelor, who took it into his head to try his hand at be-

coming a husband ere he'd die. As soon as Jemmy and his train arrived, a door was taken off the hinges, and laid on the floor, for himself to sit upon, and a new drugget quilt was spread beside it for his journeymen and apprentices. With nimble fingers they plied the needle and thread, and when night came a turf was got, into which was stuck a piece of rod, pointed at one end and split at the other; the "white candle," slipped into a shaving of the fringe that was placed in the cleft end of the stick, was then lit, whilst many a pleasant story, told by Jemmy, who had been once in Dublin for six weeks, delighted the circle of lookers-on that sat around them.

At length the day previous to the important one arrived. Hitherto, all hands had contributed to make everything in and about the house look "dacent:" scouring, washing, sweeping, pairing, and repairing had been all disposed of. The boys got their hair cut to the quick with the tailor's scissors; and such of the girls as were not full grown got only that which grew on the upper part of the head taken off by a cut somewhat resembling the clerical tonsure, so that they looked extremely wild and unsettled, with their straight locks projecting over their ears; everything, therefore, of the less important arrangements had been gone through—but the weighty and momentous concern was as yet unsettled.

This was the feast! and alas! never was the want of experience more strongly felt than here. Katty was a bad cook, even to a proverb; and bore so indifferent a character in the country for cleanliness that very few would undertake to eat her butter: indeed, she was called Katty *Sallagh*[1] on this account. However, this prejudice, whether ill or well founded, was wearing fast away since Phaddhy had succeeded to the stocking of guineas and the Lisnaskey farm. It might be, indeed, that her former poverty helped her neighbours to see this blemish more clearly: but the world is so seldom in the habit of judging people's qualities or failings through this medium that the supposition is rather doubtful. Be this as it may, the arrangements for the breakfast and dinner must be made. There was plenty of bacon, and abundance of cabbages—eggs *ad infinitum*—oaten and wheaten bread in piles—turkeys, geese, pullets, as fat as aldermen—cream as rich as Crœsus—and three gallons of poteen, one sparkle of which, as Father Philemy said in the course of the evening, would lay the hairs on St. Francis himself in his most self-negative mood, if he saw it. So far so good: everything excellent and abundant in its way. Still the higher and more refined items—the *delicice epularum*—must be added. *White bread*, and tea, and sugar were yet to be got; and lump-sugar for the punch; and a teapot and cups and saucers to be borrowed—and what else? Let me see. Yes; there was *boxty* bread to be made, to take, if they liked, with their tea; and for this purpose a number of raw-peeled potatoes were ground upon the rough side of a tin colander, and afterwards put into a sheet (for table-cloths they had none), which was twisted in contrary directions by two of the stoutest

[1] Dirty Katty.

men about the house, until it was shrunk up into a round hard lump in the middle, and made quite dry; it was then taken and (being mixed with a little flour, and some of Katty's questionable butter) formed into flat cakes, and baked upon the griddle.

Well, suppose all things disposed for to-morrow's feast—suppose Phaddhy himself to have butchered the fowl, because Katty, who was not able to bear the sight of blood, had not the heart to kill "the crathurs;" and imagine to yourself one of the servant-men taking his red-hot tongs out of the fire, and squeezing a large lump of hog's lard, placed in a grisset, or *Kam*, on the hearth, to grease all their brogues; then see in your mind's eye those two fine, fresh-looking girls, slily taking their old rusty fork out of the fire, and going to a bit of three-cornered looking-glass, pasted into a board, or, perhaps, to a pail of water, there to curl up their rich-flowing locks, that had hitherto never known a curl but such as nature gave them.

On one side of the hob sit two striplings, "thryin' wan another in their catechise," that they may be able to answer, with some credit, to-morrow. On the other hob sits Briney, hard at his Syntax, with the *Fibulæ Æsiopii*, as he called it, placed open at a particular passage, on the seat under him, with a hope that, when Father Philemy will examine him, the book may open at his favourite fable of the "*Gallus Gallinaceus*—a dung-hill cock." Phaddhy himself is obliged to fast this day, there being one day of his penance yet unperformed since the last time he was at his duty, which was, as aforesaid, about five years; and Katty, now that everything is cleaned up and ready, kneels down in a corner to go over her beads, rocking herself in a placid silence that is only broken by an occasional malediction against the servants, or the cat, when it attempts the abduction of one of the dead fowl.

The next morning the family were up before the sun, who rubbed his eyes, and swore that he must have overslept himself, on seeing such a merry column of smoke dancing over Phaddhy's chimney. A large wooden dish was placed upon the threshold of the kitchen door, filled with water, in which, with a trencher of oatmeal for soap, they successively scrubbed their faces and hands to some purpose. In a short time afterwards Phaddhy and the sons were cased, stiff and awkward, in their new suits, with the tops of their fingers just peeping over the sleeve cuffs. The horses in the stable were turned out to the fields, being obliged to make room for their betters, that were soon expected under the reverend bodies of Father Philemy and his curate; whilst about half a bushel of oats was left in the manger, to regale them on their arrival. Little Richard Maguire was sent down to the *five-acres* with the pigs, on purpose to keep them from about the house, they not being supposed fit company at a set dinner. A roaring turf fire, which blazed two yards up the chimney, had been put down; on this was placed a large pot, filled with water for the tea, because they had no kettle.

By this time the morning was tolerably advanced, and the neighbours were beginning to arrive in twos and threes, to wipe out old

scores. Katty had sent several of the gorsoons "to see if they could see any sight of the clargy," but hitherto their reverences were invisible. At length, after several fruitless embassies of this description, Father Con was seen jogging along on his easy-going hack, engaged in the perusal of his *Office*, previous to his commencing the duties of the day. As soon as his approach was announced, a chair was immediately placed for him in a room off the kitchen—the parlour, such as it was, having been reserved for Father Philemy himself, as the place of greater honour. This was an arrangement, however, which went against the grain of Phaddhy, who, had he got his will, would have established Father Con in the most comfortable apartment of the house: but that old vagabond, human nature, is the same under all circumstances—or, as Katty would have (in her own phraseology) expressed it, "still the ould cut"—for even there the influence of rank and elevation was sufficient to throw merit into the shade; and the parlour seat was allotted to Father Philemy, merely for being parish priest, although it was well known that he could not "*tare off*" mass in half the time that Father Con could; could not throw a sledge, or shoulder-stone, within a perch of him, nor scarcely clear a street-channel, whilst the latter could jump one-and-twenty feet at a running leap. But these are rubs which men of merit must occasionally bear; and, when exposed to them, they must only rest satisfied in the consciousness of their own deserts.

From the moment that Father Con became visible the conversation of those who were collected in Phaddhy's dropped gradually, as he approached the house, into a silence which was only broken by an occasional short observation, made by one or two of those who were in habits of the greatest familiarity with the priest; but when they heard the noise of his horse's feet near the door, the silence became general and uninterrupted.

There can scarcely be a greater contrast in anything than that presented by the beginning of a station-day and its close. In the morning the faces of those who are about to confess present an expression in which terror, awe, guilt, and veneration may be easily traced; but in the evening all is mirth and jollity. Before confession every man's memory is employed in running over the catalogue of crimes, as they are to be found in the prayer-books, under the ten commandments, the seven deadly sins, the *Commandments* of the Church, the four sins that cry to heaven for vengeance, and the seven sins against the Holy Ghost. How is it possible, therefore, that a man who is thus engaged in endeavouring to recollect and classify his individual offences, can possibly feel sincere sorrow, or the fear of God? According to the constitution of the human mind it cannot be done.

It is wrong to say that the Roman Catholic peasantry go *spontaneously* to comply with this unnatural rite: in many instances, it is true, they do; but they generally approach it with terror and the most unequivocal reluctance; and nothing but the strange and superstitious belief that the priests can absolve them from the guilt of their

individual sins, how black and enormous soever they may be, induces them to go at all.

When Father Con arrived, Phaddhy and Katty were instantly at the door to welcome him.

"*Musha, cead milliah failtha ghud*, to our house, Father Con, avourneen!" said Katty, dropping him a low curtsy, and spreading her new brown quilted petticoat as far out on each side of her as it would go. "Musha, and it's you that's welcome from my heart out."

"I thank you," said honest Con, who, as he knew not her name, did not pretend to know it.

"Well, Father Con," said Phaddhy, "this is the first time you have ever come to us this-a-way; but, plase God, it won't be the last, I hope."

"I hope not, Phaddhy," said Father Con, who, notwithstanding his simplicity of character, loved a good dinner in the very core of his heart, "I hope not, *indeed*, Phaddhy."

He then threw his eye about the premises, to see what point he might set his temper to during the remainder of the day; for it is right to inform our readers that a priest's temper, at a station, generally rises or falls according to the prospect of his cheer.

Here, however, a little vista, or pantry, jutting out from the kitchen, and left ostentatiously open, presented him with a view which made his very nose curl with kindness. What it contained we do not pretend to say, not having seen it ourselves; we judge, therefore, only by its effects upon his physiognomy.

"Why, Phaddhy," he says, "this is a very fine house you've got over you," throwing his eye again towards a wooden buttress which supported one of the rafters that was broken.

"Why then, your riverence, it would not be a bad one," Phaddhy replied, "if it had a new roof and new side-walls; and I intend to get both next summer, if God spares me till then."

"Then, upon my word, if it had new side-walls, a new roof, and new gavels, too," replied Father Con, "it would certainly look a great deal the better for it; and do you intend to get them next summer, Phaddhy?"

"If God spares me, sir."

"Are all these fine gorsoons yours, Phaddhy?"

"Why, so Katty says, your reverence," replied Phaddhy, with a good-humoured laugh.

"Haven't you got one of them for the Church, Phaddhy?"

"Yes, your reverence, there's one of them that I hope will live to have the *robes* upon him. Come over, Briney, and speak to Father Con. He's not very far in his Latin yet, sir; but his master tells me that he hasn't the likes of him in his school for brightness—Briney, will you come over, I say; come over, sirrah, and spake to the gintleman, and him wants to shake hands wid you—come up, man, what are you afeard of?—sure Father Con's not going to examine you now."

"No, no, Briney," said Father Con; "I'm not about to examine you at present."

"He's a little dashed, yer reverence, bekase he thought you war going to put him through some of his Latin," said the father, bringing him up like a culprit to Father Con, who shook hands with him, and, after a few questions as to the books he read, and his progress, dismissed him.

"But, Father Con, wid submission," said Katty, "where's Father Philemy from us?—sure, we expected him along wid you, and he wouldn't go to disappoint us."

"Oh, you needn't fear that, Katty," replied Father Con—"he'll be here presently—before breakfast, I'll engage for him, at any rate; but he had a touch of a headache this morning, and wasn't able to rise so early as I was."

During this conversation a little crowd collected about the door of the room in which he was to hear the confessions, each struggling and fighting to get the first turn; but here, as in the more important concerns of this world, the weakest went to the wall. He now went into the room, and, taking Katty herself first, the door was closed upon them, and he gave her absolution; and thus he continued to confess and absolve them, one by one, until breakfast.

Whenever a station occurs in Ireland, a crowd of mendicants and other strolling impostors seldom fail to attend it; on this occasion, at least, they did not. The day, though frosty, was fine; and the door was surrounded by a train of this description, including both sexes, some sitting on stones, some on stools, with their blankets rolled up under them; and others, more ostensibly devout, on their knees, hard at prayer, which, lest their piety might escape notice, our readers may be assured they did not offer up in silence. On one side you might observe a sturdy fellow, with a pair of tattered urchins secured to his back by a sheet or blanket pinned across his breast with a long iron skewer, their heads just visible at his shoulders, munching a thick piece of wheaten bread, and the father on his knees, with a huge wooden cross in his hand, repeating his *padereens*, and occasionally throwing a jolly eye towards the door, or, through the window opposite which he knelt, into the kitchen, as often as any peculiar stir or commotion led him to suppose that breakfast, the loadstar of his devotion, was about to be produced.

Scattered about the door were knots of these, men and women, occasionally chatting together; and when the subject of their conversation happened to be exhausted, resuming their beads until some new topic would occur, and so on alternately.

The interior of the kitchen where the neighbours were assembled presented an appearance somewhat more decorous. Andy Lawlor, the mass-server, in whom the priest had the greatest confidence, stood in a corner, examining in their catechism those who intended to confess; and, if they were able to stand the test he gave them a bit of twisted brown paper as a ticket, and they were received at the tribunal.

The first question the priest uniformly puts to the penitent is, "Can you repeat the *Confiteor?*" If the latter answers in the affirmative, he goes on until he comes to the words, *mea culpa, mea culpa, mea*

maxima culpa, when he stops, it being improper to repeat the remainder until after he has confessed ; but, if he is ignorant of the *Confiteor, the priest repeats it for him!* and he commences the rehearsal of his offences specifically as they occurred ; and not only does he reveal his individual crimes, but his very thoughts and intentions. By this wily regulation our readers may easily perceive that the penitent is completely at the mercy of the priest—that all family feuds, quarrels, and secrets are laid open to his eye—that the ruling passions of men's lives are held up before him, and all the weaknesses and propensities of a corrupt nature, all the unguarded avenues of the human heart and character, are brought within his positive knowledge, and that, too, as they exist in the young and the old, the married and the single, the male and the female. It has been often wondered at, why there is, and has been, such a deplorable prostration of reason and moral independence before the priesthood of the Church of Rome in the persons of their followers ; but, let me ask, would it not be a greater anomaly were it otherwise? How is it possible for any individual who throws open the secret corruptions and failings of his heart before the eye of a priest—who puts him in possession of all the crimes and delinquencies of his life—to stand in the confidence of a manly and erect independence before him? Is it possible that he should be able to look him in the face, or bear the force of his glance? Under these circumstances, without at all considering the influence produced by the spiritual power with which Roman Catholics believe the priests to be invested, let us not think it strange that such a melancholy debasement characterises the laity of the Romish Church.

It was curious to remark the ludicrous expression of temporary sanctity which was apparent on the countenances of many young men and maidens who were remarkable in the neighbourhood for attending dances and wakes, but who, on the present occasion, were sobered down to a gravity which sat very awkwardly upon them ; particularly in the eyes of those who knew the lightness and drollery of their characters. This, however, was observable only *before* confession ; for, as soon as "the priest's blessed hand had been over them," their gloom and anxiety passed away, and the thoughtless buoyancy of their natural disposition resumed its influence over their minds. A good-humoured nod, or a sly wink, from a young man to his female acquaintance would now be indulged in ; or, perhaps, a small joke would escape, which seldom failed to produce a subdued laugh from such as *had* confessed, or an impatient rebuke from those who had *not*.

"Tim!" one would exclaim, "aren't ye ashamed or afeard to get an that-a-way, and his reverence undher the wan roof wid ye?"

"Tim, you had better dhrop your joking," a second would observe, "and not be putting us through other, wherein we have our offinces to remimber ; you have got your *job* over, and now you have nothing to trouble you."

"Indeed, it's fine behaviour," a third would say, "and you afther coming from the priest's knee ; and what is more, didn't *resave* yet ;

but wait till Father Con appears, and I'll warrant you'll be as g ave as another, for all you're so stout now."

The conversation would then pass to the merits of Father Philemy and Father Con as confessors.

"Well," one would observe, "for my part I'd rather go to Father Philemy fifty times over than wanst to Father Con, bekase he never axes questions; but whatever you like to tell him, he hears it, and forgives you at wanst."

"And so sign's an it," observed another, "he could confess more in a day than Father Con could in a week."

"But for all that," observed Andy Lawlor, "it's still best to go to the man that puts the questions, you persave, and that won't let the turning of a straw escape him. Whin myself goes to Father Philemy, somehow or other, I totally disremember more nor wan half of what I intinded to tell him, but Father Con misses nothing, for he axes it."

When the last observation was finished, Father Con. finding that the usual hour for breakfast had arrived, came into the kitchen to prepare for the celebration of mass. For this purpose a table was cleared, and just in the nick of time arrived old Moll Brian, the vestment woman, or itinerant sacristan, whose usual occupation was to carry the priests' *robes* and other apparatus from station to station. In a short time Father Con was surpliced and robed; Andy Lawlor, whose face was charged with commensurate importance during the ceremony, *sarved* mass, and answered the priest stoutly in Latin, although he had not the advantage of understanding that sacerdotal language. Those who had *confessed* now *communicated;* after which each of them took a draught of water out of a small jug, which was handed round from one to another. The ceremony then closed, and those who had partaken of the sacrament, with the exception of such as were detained for breakfast, after filling their bottles with holy water, went home with a light heart. A little before the mass had been finished Father Philemy arrived; but, as Phaddhy and Katty were then preparing to *receive*, they could not at that moment give him a formal reception. As soon, however, as communion was over, the *cead milliah failtah* was repeated with the usual warmth by both, and by all their immediate friends.

Breakfast was now laid in Katty's best style, and with an originality of arrangement that scorned all precedent. Two tables were placed, one after another, in the kitchen; for the other rooms were not sufficiently large to accommodate the company. Father Philemy filled the seat of honour at the head of the table, with his back to an immense fire. On his right hand sat Father Con; on his left, Phaddhy himself, "to keep the *clargy* in company;" and, in due succession after them, their friends and neighbours, each taking precedence according to the most scrupulous notions of respectability. Beside Father Con sat "Pether Malone," a "young collegian," who had been sent home from Maynooth to try his native air for the recovery of his health, which was declining. He arrived only a few minutes after Father Philemy, and was a welcome reinforcement to Phaddhy

in the arduous task of sustaining the conversation with suitable credit.

With respect to the breakfast I can only say that it was superabundant—that the tea was as black as bog water—that there were hen, turkey, and geese eggs—plates of toast soaked, crust and crumb, in butter, and, lest there might be a deficiency, one of the daughters sat on a stool at the fire, with her open hand, by way of a fire-screen across her red, half-scorched brows, toasting another plateful; and, to crown all, on each corner of the table was a bottle of whisky. At the lower board sat the youngsters, under the *surveillance* of Katty's sister, who presided in that quarter. When they were commencing breakfast, "Father Philemy," said Katty, "won't yer rev'rence bless the mate, if ye plase?"

"If I don't do it myself," said Father Philemy, who was just after sweeping the top off a turkey egg, "I'll get them that will. Come," said he to the collegian, "give us grace, Peter, you'll never learn younger."

This, however, was an unexpected blow to Peter, who knew that an English grace would be incompatible with his "college breeding," yet was unprovided with any in Latin. The eyes of the company were now fixed upon him, and he blushed like scarlet on finding himself in a predicament so awkward and embarrassing. "*Aliquid, Petre, aliquid; 'de profundis'—si habes nihil aliud*," said Father Philemy, feeling for his embarrassment, and giving him a hint. This was not lost, for Peter began, and gave them the *De profundis*, a Latin psalm which Roman Catholics repeat for the relief of the souls in purgatory. They forgot, however, that there was a person in company who considered himself as having an equal claim to the repetition of at least the one-half of it; and accordingly, when Peter got up and repeated the first verse, Andy Lawlor got also on his legs, and repeated the response.[1] This staggered Peter a little, who hesitated, as uncertain how to act.

"*Perge, Petre, Perge*," said Father Philemy, looking rather wistfully at his egg—"*Perge, stultus est et asinus quoque.*" Peter and Andy proceeded until it was finished, when they resumed their seats.

The conversation during breakfast was as sprightly, as full of fun and humour, as such breakfasts usually are. The priest, Phaddhy, and the young collegian had a topic of their own, whilst the rest were engaged in a kind of by-play until the meal was finished.

"Father Philemy," said Phaddhy, in his capacity of host, "before we begin we'll all take a dhrop of what's in the bottle, if it's not displasing to yer reverence; and, sure, I know 'tis the same doesn't come wrong at a station, anyhow."

This, *more majorum*, was complied with; and the glass, as usual, went round the table, beginning with their reverences. They had not, however, been long at breakfast when a circumstance occurred which, that our readers may be enabled to form an opinion upon it, renders it necessary for us to go back a little in our narrative.

[1] This prayer is generally repeated by two persons.

In the immediate vicinity of the scene of our present sketch lived a man named Jack Shields, who was considered by his neighbours to be a person of an amiable, benevolent disposition: moral and inoffensive in his conduct, as well as upright and honest in his principles and dealings—but looked upon to be somewhat eccentric in his general manners. Shields was a man very much addicted to reading, and had entertained for years before the period in question rather singular opinions upon several tenets of his own Church. He read both the Douay and the Protestant Bibles, in defiance of the priest; gave mass up altogether, except when he understood that the priest was to preach, and then he was punctual in his attendance. He had also abandoned confession—having often been heard to say that he did not think his brother sinner had any power to absolve his soul from the guilt which he incurred in relation to God. "I know," he would say, "*I am sure* that *God can* forgive me; but I have not the same certainty as to the priest. God has commanded me to come to *Himself*, repenting, and has promised to pardon me: now this is enough for me, so I'll take the sure side."

When this came to the priest's ears, together with the account of his absenting himself from mass, he sent for him one day that he held a station in the neighbourhood, and Shields, with his Bible in his pocket, waited upon him without any reluctance.

"Jack," said the priest, "is all this true that I hear about you?"

"Now, doesn't yer reverence know," replies Jack, "that that's more than I can say till I hear it?"

"I'm told," said the priest, addressing himself to what he considered to be the root of the evil—"I'm told, Jack, that you've got a Protestant Bible under your roof."

"I have," replied Shields, "and a Catholic one to the back of that, which I suppose your reverence didn't hear."

"I should think," said the other, "the Bible of your own Church ought to be sufficient for you."

"The doctrines of our Church are all just and true, I suppose?" replied Jack, more skilfully than his reverence was prepared for.

"You suppose!" replied the other. "Why, do you doubt it, sir?"

"I'm not saying I do, your reverence," responded Jack. "I suppose the Bible is equal to the Church in soundness—I mean our *own* Bible."

"Undoubtedly," said the priest; "it is the written word of God."

"Well, now, it's comfortable to hear your reverence say so; because, as our Church is true in all her doctrines and practices, and as our Bible is equally sound and uncorrupt, why, wid the help of God, I'll go home and examine both; and surely, as you have no fear that by doing so I can find out anything wrong in the Church, you can't object against this."

"If you believe the Church to be pure," said the priest, "what necessity is there for your entering upon such a task?"

"Why, I believe it to be so," replied the other; "yet, somehow, if you were to ax me why I believe this—may I never do harm, but your reverence would puzzle me."

"Don't you believe, sir," said Father Philemy, "whatever the Church proposes for your belief?"

"I'll tell you what," replied Jack, "to make short work of it, I don't know the tithe of what the Church proposes to my belief: no, nor the tythe of that again: and now, your reverence, how can I believe what I don't know? How-an'-ever, I'm sartinly very willing that the Church should give me proper instructions in what I'm to believe; but then, docthor, on the other hand, where am I to go to look for the Church?"

Father Philemy closed his eyes a little, and peered at Shields, as if he would have looked into his very spirit. "Shields," said he, dropping the subject, however, "I perceive clearly that you are verging into heresy, which is the result of your reading heretical books: you must send me that Bible—you must send me both Bibles; and, moreover, you must mind your business, and let theology alone."

"I don't neglect my business," said the other; "and I'm very willing to send you both back; but before I do, yer reverence must tell me where I'm to find the Church; may I never do harm, but I'm longing to have one meeting with her. Somehow or other, I think it would be pleasant to hear a few words upon the subject from her own lips, that is, if one *could* stumble on her; for, although it's said she's 'visible,' not a wan of myself ever was able to lay my two living eyes upon her yet."

"Sir," says Father Philemy, "you should have better breeding than to address me, or speak of the Church, in that sneering, disrespectful manner—there is more reverence due to us both."

"I declare it, your reverence," replied Shields, "I'm in the hoith of good humour with both of you; but I've got no answer to my question. Now, suppose I want the Church, where am I to find her, docthor?"

"Jack, the doctrines of our Church are specified and promulgated in her own councils and decrees, and they are to be found there."

"Very good, sir; there's some satisfaction in that; I like to come to the point: and may I ask yer reverence how many councils there were?"

"What's that to you, sir, how many there were," replied Father Philemy; "it's not the number of councils you are to believe, but the doctrines contained in their decrees."

"Well, sir, I don't object against that same, for there's rason in it; but will yer reverence lend me the book they're in, until I run my eye over them—I'll not keep it more nor a day or two, and I'll take especial good care of it; for, to tell the truth, I think it ought to be in everybody's hands."

"In the first place, Jack," replied Father Philemy, "I'll show you now the nature of *implicit* faith. The doctrines of our Church are contained in several large folio books, not one word of which you could understand, for you are not a classical scholar; you see, therefore, Jack, that it's not for an ignorant fellow like you to be turning your brain about what does not come under your line of duty; but,

for all that, you're bound to believe them under pain of excommunication. These doctrines are laid down and explained by the pastors of our Church, whose duty it is to enforce them; and in case of obstinacy or unbelief, to exercise the authority which the Church has delegated to them against the refractory and disobedient."

During this cogent argument of the priest's, Shields stood with a countenance on which astonishment was very strongly depicted. "The short and the long of it is this," he replied, "that the Church won't show herself to the poor and ignorant, at all at all—to none but the priests; and so we're to believe what we don't know, and what we can't know, and without having an opportunity of knowing whether it's true or not. That's not fair, I think; then, in the next place, the priest is all the Church we have to go to, whatever we want to know."

"And is not that sufficient?" said the priest.

"Yes; but how are we to know that the priest sticks to the Church, whin we can't see her rale doctrines? And agin, Docthor—how are we to know that all these doctrines are right, if we're not allowed to try and compare them with the word of God, which you grant *can't* be wrong? May I never sin, Docthor, but I think it's a little too hard to keep us from the Church and the word of God both."

"Jack, my dear friend," said Father Philemy, in a softened, conciliating tone, "you are bewildering yourself—indeed, you are; and I am sorry to see you in such a perplexed state of mind; but, as I said before, it is the consequence of your endeavouring to go beyond your depth, to understand more than you are bound to know. I'm sorry also to find that you neglect your duty of late, and that you are never seen at mass."

"I would rather, sir," said Shields, "that you had brought about a meeting between me and the Church — but the truth is that yer reverence represints the Church."

"Ay, now, John, it's something about that; you are beginning to speak sense; I certainly stand in that capacity to every one of my parishioners, and, for that reason, they are bound to hear *me* as they would the Church."

"Yet," said Jack, with a sarcastic pertinacity that was by no means savoury to his reverence, "the Church is *holy*, and *apostolical*, and *universal?*"

"She is," replied the priest.

"And yer reverence represints her!" said the other. "Now, Father Philemy, do you remimber the day that you held the station in my own house?"

"I do, about Easter last," replied the priest.

"Well, *so do I*;" said Shields, without adding another word.

Father Philemy now lost his temper; for, although he fairly exposed himself to the *argumentum ad hominem*, yet he was incapable of bearing it with patience. "Shields," said he, "I have borne your sneers with too much indulgence, because I have a regard for your family and for yourself; but I tell you now that I insist, sir, on your depositing *both* your Bibles in my hands—I say I *insist* on it; and if

you do not come to your duty, and attend mass as usual, I will expose you from the altar ; and if that doesn't do, I'll take other measures—so look to it."

"If yer rev'rence," replied the other, "wishes to get any good of me, *convince me*—otherwise, sir, you needn't resort to bullying, for that's the very thing would make me stiffer ; and, in respect of denouncing me from the althar—if ye did, I wouldn't stay two days in yer Church."

"I see," said the priest, "you're nothing but a headstrong fool, and it is only a loss of time and a waste of patience to speak to you."

"I know I'm very little that's good," says Shields ; "but I know yer rev'rence has given me no satisfaction consarning the Church. Now, sir, before I lave you ——"

"And that can't be a moment too soon, you blackguard, you," interrupted Father Philemy.

"I say, sir, before I lave you, let me ask, did not the Son of God himself spake and prache, and address himself to the poor?—didn't he instruct them in all things necessary for them to know? didn't he command them, with his own blessed lips, to sarche the Scriptures, for that they contained eternal life? You desire me to come to my duty : did ever the Lord himself tell us that a fellow-crathur could forgive us our sins?—or, whether did he bid us come to you or himself? Will yer rev'rence answer me these questions? You say, *you* can forgive me my sins, and that I ought to come to you for that purpose. My Redeemer says that HE can and WILL forgive me my sins, if I repent and go to HIM ; which am I to follow—you or the Almighty? 'Come to ME,' he says, 'all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest ; if your sins were like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.' Your rev'rence stands there as the Church, and you bid me close the Word of God, and not read it. The Lord desires me to search it ; and, indeed, docthor, I'm very far from going to obey you or the Church either, before God himself, when *you* and *he* command different things. And with respect of going to mass, did Christ or his Apostles spake to the people in an unknown tongue that they did not understand? Instead of that same, didn't the Apostles get the gift of tongues, that the strange nations might understand their prayers and instructions? No ; as God has promised to forgive, I'll go to God, and, with his blessing, I'll tache my childher to do the same."

"Get out, you reprobate," replied Father Philemy, wholly losing his temper ; "out with you, and don't pollute the dacent man's house with your heretical breath, you vagabone, you. I'll lay my horse-whip to your back."

"Ay, that's your strongest argument," replied Jack. "That's your usual method of convincing—and a creditable one it is."

Shields then withdrew ; and when he was gone, "That man's going straight to hell," observed his reverence, "and, what is more, he'll bring his children along with him."

"The Lord be about us, Father Philemy," observed those who were present, "don't prophesy sich a thing !—who would think it, and he so good and sensible a man?"

"Tom," said the priest, "after all, I believe there is but one way with him, and that's mildness—the fellow may lead but he won't drive; run after him and tell him to stop and eat his dinner with us; I suppose you'll have no objection to that, Phaddhy?"

"Is it me, your rev'rence?—och, och, and it's his father's son that would be welcome to a pratie and wather, if I had but that."

"Well, tell him to stop and spend the evening with us; say that I wish to have some conversation with him in a friendly way."

Shields, however, saw through this *finesse*, and was determined to disappoint his reverence. "Tell him that I'll hear him some other time," said he, smiling. "I know that the argument his rev'rence would bring against me might *lay me on my back*, but it couldn't convince me for all that. Didn't I give him a right hit about the station?"

"I tell ye, Jack," replied the other, "it's a big shame for ye to be getting an as ye do; you should go to yer duty and to mass like another."

"Ah, Tom," said Jack, "lave that to myself; do you think I'd do anything that would go against my own salvation? But ye may tell him this, that, excepting he goes to drive me out of it, I'll never lave the Church I'm in, bekase I believe I can be saved in it as well as in any other, although my knee I'll never bend under him, or any other man, by way of confession, while I live." So saying, he pursued his way home.

When the man returned, he repeated the conversation that passed between him and Shields, not omitting a word.

"Well," said the priest, "I'm not surprised that the Church interdicts the Word of God to the laity; for, when one of them gets it for any length of time into his hands, he becomes as cunning as a bag fox: did you only hear that fellow just now? Nothing will do him, indeed, but *conviction!*—however, he is a stiff-necked animal, and must only be allowed to take his own swing and be damned his own way."

Shields literally kept his word; for, true to his views, he neither went to mass nor confession afterwards. In such tenets of his own Church as he believed were true and scriptural he educated and instructed his son and daughter, the only children he had. He also permitted both to attend mass, and the former to go to confession; but the daughter he would by no means allow to frequent that distressing rite.

His wife, however, who was as weak and as bigoted as the husband was firm and liberal, perpetually harassed the daughter about the sin of neglecting confession; but the latter was intimately acquainted with the Bible, and without at all being aware of it, was considerably more attached to the Protestant than to her own Church. For two or three years—that is, during the period in which the mere girl approximates to the full-grown woman—the mother's arguments to induce her to go to her duty were fruitless—for the father had drawn by no means a favourable character of confession, and the daughter, possessing a

pure and modest mind, entertained a rooted aversion against it. But a little before the time of Phaddhy's station the mother began to exhibit symptoms of a decline, and as she never ceased pressing the former on this point, the affection which was excited in the daughter's breast by the apprehension of losing her induced a compliance on her part which no other circumstances could have affected—for Mary (so she was called) possessed much of her father's good sense, firmness, and independence.

The mother having at length prevailed, she and Mary attended at Phaddhy's early on the morning of the station in question. As soon as they entered the house, there was an especial welcome for both, particularly for the daughter, because the peculiar principles in which Shields had educated her, and her own firm adherence to them, were well known.

"Well, Katty, avourneen," said her mother—"blessed be the holy mother of God for it, she has come at long last; and it's well for her, ahagur, that she took my advice, I hope, for, indeed, Phaddhy," turning the discourse to *him*, "I won't be long with her—see how that bit of a walk up here has left me without a blast of breath in my body!"

The mother was certainly very much exhausted, and had every appearance of being in a deep and rapid decline. As she uttered these words, the daughter, who sat removed from the crowd that occupied the lower end of the house, fixed her eyes upon her, and, in an instant, her long dark lashes were filled with tears. Mary, indeed, was a girl of uncommon personal beauty and fine figure, and as she sat with her pocket-handkerchief between her hands, and her dark eyes shining through her tears, she was certainly calculated to excite a strong interest in her favour. She wore no cap, but had a dark ribbon tied simply round her head, from which her brown clustering locks fell in thick luxuriant curls over her fair neck and shoulders. Her hair was divided before, and showed a white polished forehead, that would have graced a higher station in life. It might have been easily remarked that her attendance here was involuntary, for there was a feverish anxiety about her amounting to a visible tremor. She was wrapped in thought, and sometimes appeared so pale that one might almost feel apprehensive of her swooning away—at other times so flushed that her face and neck were suffused with one glow of crimson. In this state of agitation she remained until the person who had been in with Father Con came out; her mother then said, "Mary, come now, acushla, there's nobody with Father Con: come and pluck up courage, alannah—you won't be long, and the best way for you is to get it over you, and then your mind will be aisy." Mary, however, got as pale as death, and her lips became white. She rose up, but was obliged to sit down again until she regained more strength. In the meantime her mother and Katty, and several other of the women then present, afforded her every assistance; as her lips were parched, she asked for a drink of water, but this she could not get.

"Mary, asthore," said the mother, "you know you couldn't get a dhrink of wather till afther you resave the sacrament."

"I wish, mother dear," said the modest girl, "my father was with me; if he was, I wouldn't be so weak, I think."

This she spoke in a very feeble voice, for all the moral instincts and delicate sensibilities of a modest disposition were up in arms against this profane violation—this daring intrusion into those recesses of the human heart which are, and ought to be, visible only to that God to whom all things are known.

At last, by the force of flattery and persuasion, eked out with several melancholy allusions by the mother to her own state of health, Mary went in to comply with an ordinance which she felt to be revolting and indelicate in the highest degree; one which her soul detested and shrunk from with mingled detestation and horror. On her return from the confessional she walked up to the remote seat she had before occupied, which was instantly vacated on her approach to it; for the beauty of her person and her modesty commanded general admiration and respect. There was now a marked change visible in her countenance and demeanour; for although she sat as quiet as usual, there was on her complexion a flush of deeper hue than had mantled her cheek before; her eye, too, was lit with a spark much more vivid than the mild and mellow light which usually shone there. Instead of appearing timid, her nerves were evidently strung to a high degree of firmness and tension, and her whole air betrayed marks of distress, indignation, and disgust. When she came out, her mother went in to confess, who was the last Father Con heard before mass. From the time Mary left Father Con until breakfast, she was certainly suffering intensely from her own feelings and reflections; for it was with much difficulty that she suppressed the tears which started to her eyes. Indeed, it was evident that if she had been alone she would have relieved herself very much by weeping; but an apprehension of attracting notice restrained her tears, whilst it increased her distress. This state of prolonged excitement was more than she could bear; for, a short time afterwards, a powerful reaction in the state of her animal spirits and nerves took place. She became deadly and fearfully pale; and after many struggles against the weight which sank down her spirits so heavily, she at length fell into a fit of strong and alarming convulsions. This was an interruption to the harmony of the breakfast which was by no means expected. She was now removed into another room; the women, with much difficulty, succeeded in restoring her to consciousness, or, at least, in assisting nature to restore herself. When she found herself among none but her own sex, she gave full vent to her tears, and wept long and bitterly. She then insisted on going home to her father, a determination which no force or entreaty could prevent her from putting into execution. She accordingly departed without noticing anyone in the house, and the breakfast went on gloomily enough until it was finished.

Such was the effect which the unnatural and gross act of disclosing the frailties and weaknesses of a female to a man in private had upon

the natural modesty of a young woman. To make such an act a religious ceremony, when we consider the weakness of human passion, is probably the best clue to the complacency with which the Roman Catholic priesthood bear a life of celibacy. Of Mary it is only necessary to say that, ere many years passed, she and her father both embraced the Protestant faith.

Hitherto Father Philemy had not had time to bestow any attention on the state of Katty's larder, as he was in the habit of doing, with a view to ascertain the several items contained therein for dinner. But as soon as the breakfast things were removed, and the coast clear, he took a peep into the pantry, and after throwing his eye over its contents, sat down at the fire, making Phaddhy take a seat beside him, for the especial purpose of sounding him as to the practicability of effecting a certain design which was then snugly latent in his reverence's fancy. The fact was, that on taking the survey of the premises aforesaid, he discovered that, although there was abundance of fowl, and fish, and bacon, and hung-beef—yet, by some unaccountable and disastrous omission, there was neither fresh mutton nor fresh beef. The priest, it must be confessed, was a man of considerable fortitude, but this was a blow for which he was scarcely prepared—particularly as a boiled leg of mutton was one of his fifteen favourite joints at dinner. He accordingly took two or three pinches of snuff in rapid succession, and a seat at the fire, as I have said, placing Phaddhy, unconscious of his design, immediately beside him.

Now, the reader knows that Phaddhy was a man possessing a considerable portion of dry, sarcastic humour, along with that natural quickness of penetration and shrewdness for which most of the Irish peasantry are, in a very peculiar degree, remarkable; add to this that Father Philemy, in consequence of his contemptuous bearing to him before he came in for his brother's property, stood not very high in his estimation. The priest knew this, and consequently felt that the point in question would require to be managed, on his part, with suitable address.

"Phaddhy," says his reverence, "sit down here till we chat a little, before I commence the duties of the day. I'm happy to see that you have such a fine thriving family: how many sons and daughters have you?"

"Six sons, yer reverence," replied Phaddhy, "and five daughters: indeed, sir, they're as well to be seen as their neighbours, considhering all things. Poor crathurs, they get fair play[1] now, thank God, compared to what they used to get—God rest their poor uncle's sowl for that. Only for him, your reverence, there would be very few inquiring this or any other day about them."

"Did he die as rich as they said, Phaddhy?" inquired his reverence.

"Hut, sir," replied Phaddhy, determined to take what he afterwards called *a rise* out of the priest; "they knew little about it—as rich as

[1] By this is meant good food and clothing.

they said, sir! no, but three times as rich, itself: but, anyhow, he was the man that could make the money."

"I'm very happy to hear it, Phaddhy, on your account and that of your children. God be good to him—*requiescat animus ejus in pace, per omnia secula seculorum, Amen!*—he liked a drop in his time, Phaddhy, as well as ourselves, eh?"

"*Amen, amen*—the heavens be his bed!—he did, poor man! but he had it at first cost, your reverence, for he *run* it all himself in the mountains: he could afford to take it."

"Yes, Phaddhy, the heavens be his bed, I pray; no Christmas or Easter ever passed but he was sure to send me the little keg of stuff that never saw water; but, Phaddhy, there's one thing that concerns me about him, in regard of his love of drink—I'm afraid it's a trouble to him where he is at present; and I was sorry to find that, although he died full of money, he didn't think it worth his while to leave even the price of a mass to be said for the benefit of his own soul."

"Why, sure you know, Father Philemy, that he wasn't what they call a dhrinking man: once a quarther, or so, he sartinly did take a jorum; and, except at these times, he was very sober. But God look upon us both, yer reverence—or upon myself, anyway; for I haven't yer excuse for dhrinking, seeing I'm *no* clargy; but if *he's* to suffer for his doings that-a-way, I'm afeard *we'll* have a troublesome reck'ning of it."

"Hem, a-hem!—Phaddhy," replied the priest, "he has raised you and your children from poverty, at all events, and you ought to consider *that*. If there is anything in your power to contribute to the relief of his soul, you have a strong duty upon you to do it; and a number of masses, offered up devoutly, would ——"

"Why, he did, sir, raise both myself and my childhre from poverty," said Phaddhy, not willing to let that point go farther—"*that* I'll always own to; and I hope in God that whatever little trouble might be upon him for the dhrop of dhrink, will be wiped off by this kindness to us."

"He hadn't even a *month's mind!*"

"And it's not but I spoke to him about both, yer reverence."

"And what did he say, Phaddhy?"

"'Phaddhy,' said he, 'I have been giving Father M'Guirk, one way or another, between whisky, oats, and dues, a great deal of money every year; and now, afther I'm dead,' says he, 'isn't it an ungrateful thing of him not to offer up one mass for my sowl, except I leave him payment for it.'"

"Did he say that, Phaddhy?"

"I'm giving you his very words, yer reverence."

"Phaddhy, I deny it; it's a big lie—he could not make use of such words, and he going to face death. I say you could not listen to them; the hair would stand on your head if he did: but God forgive him!—that's the worst I wish him. Didn't the hair stand on your head, Phaddhy, to hear him?"

"Why, then, to tell yer reverence God's truth, I can't say it did."

"You can't say it did! and if I was in your coat, I would be ashamed to say it did not. I was always troubled about the way the fellow died, but I hadn't the slightest notion that he went off such a reprobate. I fought *his* battle and *yours* hard enough yesterday; but I knew less about him then than I do now."

"And what, wid submission, did you fight our battles about, yer reverence?" inquired Phaddhy.

"Yesterday evening, in Parrah More Slevin's, they had him a miser, and yourself they set down as very little better."

"Then I don't think I desarved that from Parrah More, anyhow, Father Philemy; I think I can show myself as dacent as Parrah More or any of *his* faction."

"It was not Parrah More himself, or his family, that said anything about you, Phaddhy," said the priest, "but others that were present. You must know that we were all to be *starved* here to-day."

"Oh! oh!" exclaimed Phaddhy, who was hit most palpably upon the weakest side—the very sorest spot about him, "they think bekase this is the first station that ever was held in *my* house, that you won't be thrated as you ought; but they'll be disappointed; and I hope, for so far, that yer reverence and yer friends had no rason to complain."

"Not in the least, Phaddhy, considering that it was a first station; and if the dinner goes as well off as the breakfast, they'll be biting their nails: but I should not wish myself that they would have it in their power to sneer or throw any slur over you about it.——Go along, Dolan," exclaimed his reverence to a countryman who came in from the street, where those stood who were for confession, to see if he had gone to his room—"Go along, you vagrant, don't you see I'm not gone to the *tribunal* yet?——But it's no matter about that, Phaddhy; it's of other things you ought to think: when were you at your duty?"

"This morning, sir," replied the other—"but I'd have them to understand that had the presumption to use my name in any such manner that I know when and where to be dacint with any mother's son of Parrah More's faction; and *that* I'll be afther whispering to them some of these mornings, plase goodness."

"Well, well, Phaddhy, don't put yourself in a passion about it, particularly so soon after having been at confession—it's not right; I told them myself that we'd have a leg of mutton and a bottle of wine at all events, for that was what *they* had; but that's not worth talking about; when were you with the priest before, Phaddhy?"

"If I wasn't able, it would be another thing, but, as long as I'm able, I'll let them know that I have the spirit"—said Phaddhy, smarting under the imputation of niggardliness—"when was I at confession before, Father Philemy? Why, then, dear forgive me, not these five years; and I'd surely be the first of the family that would show a mane spirit, or a want of hospitality."

"A leg of mutton is a good dish, and a bottle of wine is fit for the first man in the land!" observed his reverence—"five years!—why, is it possible you stayed away so long, Phaddhy!—how could you expect

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to prosper with five years' burden of sin upon your conscience—what would it cost you ——?"

"Indeed, myself's no judge, your rev'rence, as to that; but cost what it will, I'll get both

"I say, Phaddhy, what trouble would it cost you to come to your duty twice a year at the very least; and, indeed, I would advise you to become a monthly communicant. Parrah More was speaking of it as to himself, and you ought to go ——

"And I will go and bring Parrah More here to his dinner, this very day, if it was only to let him see with his own eyes ——"

"You ought to go once a month, if it was only to set an example to your children, and to show the neighbours how a man of substance and respectability, and the head of a family, ought to carry himself."

"Where is the best wine got, yer rev'rence?"

"Alick M'Loughlin, *my nephew*, I believe, keeps the best wine and spirits in Ballyslantha. You ought also, Phaddhy, to get a scapular, and become a scapularian; I wish your brother had thought of *that*, and he wouldn't have died in so hardened a state, nor neglected to make a provision for the benefit of his soul, as he did."

"Lave the rest to me, yer rev'rence, I'll get it—Mr. M'Loughlin will give me the right sort, if he has it betune him and death."

"M'Loughlin! what are you talking about?"

"Why, what is your rev'rence talking about?"

"The scapular," said the priest.

"But I mane the wine and the mutton," says Phaddhy.

"And is that the way you treat me, you reprobate, you?" replied his reverence, in a passion: "is that the kind of attention you're paying me, and I advising you, all this time, *for the good of your soul?* Phaddhy, I tell you, you're enough to vex me to the core—five years!—only once at confession in five years! What do I care about your mutton and your wine!—you may get dozens of them if you wish; or, maybe, it would be more like a Christian to never mind them, and let the neighbours *laugh* away. It would teach you humility, you hardened creature, and God knows you want it; for my part, I'm speaking to you about other things; but that's the way with the most of you—mention any spiritual subject that concerns your soul, and you turn a deaf ear to it—here, Dolan, come in to your duty. In the meantime you may as well tell Katty not to boil the mutton too much; it's on your knees you ought to be at your rosary or the seven penitential psalms."

"Thrue for you, sir," said Phaddhy; "but as to going wanst a month, I'm afeard, yer rev'rence, if it would shorten my timper as it does Katty's, that we'd be bad company for one another; she comes home from confession newly set, like a razor, every bit as sharp; and I'm sure that I'm within the truth when I say there's no bearing her."

'That's because you have no relish for anything spiritual yourself, you, nager, you," replied his reverence, "or you wouldn't see her temper in that light—but, now that I think of it, where did you get that stuff we had at breakfast?"

"Ay, that's the sacret ; but I knew yer rev'rence would like it : did Parrah More equal it? No, nor one of his faction couldn't lay his finger on such a dhrop."

"I wish you could get me a few gallons of it," said the priest ; "but let us dhrop that ; I say, Phaddhy, you're too worldly and careless about your duty."

"Well, Father Philemy, there's a good time coming ; I'll mend yet."

"You want it, Phaddhy."

"Would three gallons do, sir?"

"I would rather you would give me five, Phaddhy ; but go to your rosary."

"It's the penitential psalm, first, sir," said Phaddhy, "and the rosary at night. I'll try, anyhow ; and if I can make off five for you I will."

"Thank you, Phaddhy ; but I would recommend you to say the rosary *before* night."

"I believe yer reverence is right," replied Phaddhy, looking somewhat slyly in the priest's face ; "I think it's best to make sure of it now, in regard that in the evening your reverence—do you persave?"

"Yes," said his reverence, "you're in a better frame of mind at present, Phaddhy, being fresh from confession." So saying, his reverence, for whom Phaddhy, with all his shrewdness in general was not a match, went into his room, that he might send home about four dozen of honest, good-humoured, thoughtless, jovial, swearing, drinking, fighting, and murdering Hibernians, free from every possible stain of sin and wickedness!

"Are you all ready now?" said the priest to a crowd of country people who were standing about the kitchen door, pressing to get the "first turn" at the tribunal, which, on this occasion, consisted of a good oak chair with his reverence upon it.

"Why do you crush forward in that manner, you ill-bred spalpeens? Can't you stand back and behave yourselves like common Christians? —back with you, or, if you make me get my whip, I'll soon clear you from about the dacent man's door. Hagarty, why do you crush them two girls there, you great Turk, you? Look at the vagabonds!— —Where's my whip?" said he, running in, and coming out in a fury, when he commenced cutting about him, until they dispersed in all directions. He then returned into the house ; and, after calling in about two dozen, began to catechise them as follows, still holding the whip in his hand, whilst many of those individuals, who, at a party quarrel in fair or market, or in the more inhuman crimes of murder or nightly depredations, were as callous and hardened specimens of humanity as ever set the laws of civilised society at defiance, stood trembling before him like slaves, absolutely pale and breathless with fear.

"Come, Kelly," said he to one of them, "are you fully prepared for the two blessed sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, that you are about to receive? Can you read, sir?"

"Can I read, is id?—my *brother Barney* can, yer reverence," replied Kelly, sensible, amid all the disadvantages around him, of the degradation of his ignorance.

"What's that to me, sir?" said the priest, "what your brother Barney can do—can you not read yourself?—and, maybe," he continued, parenthetically, "your brother Barney's not much the holier for his knowledge."

"I cannot, yer reverence," said Kelly, in a tone of regret.

"I hope you have your Christian Doctrine, at all events," said the priest—"Go on with the Confiteor."

Kelly went on—"*Confeetur Dimniportenti batchy Mary semplar virginy, batchy Mickletoe Archy Angelo batchy Johnny Bartisty, sanctris postlis—Petrum hit Paulum, omnium sanctris, et tabby, pasture quay a pixavit minus coglety ashy hony verbum et offer him smaxy quilta smaxy quilta smaxy maxin in quilta.*"[1]

"Very well, Kelly, right enough, all except the pronouncing, which wouldn't pass muster in Maynooth, however. How many kinds of commandments are there?"

"Two, sir."

"What are they?"

"God's and the Church's."

"Repeat God's share of them."

He then repeated the first commandment according to *his* catechism.

"Very good, Kelly, very good. Now, you must know that the heretics split that into two, for no other reason in the world only to knock our blessed images on the head; but we needn't expect them to have much conscience. Well, now repeat the commandments of the Church."

"First—Sundays and holidays, Mass thou shalt sartinly hear;
Second—All holidays sanctificate throughout all the whole year.
Third—Lent, Ember days, and Virgils, thou shalt be sartin to fast;
Fourth—Fridays and Saturdays flesh thou shalt not, good, bad, or indifferent, taste.
Fifth—In Lent and Advent, nuptial fastes gallantly forbear;
Sixth—Confess your sins, at laste once dacently and soberly every year.
Seventh—Receive your God at confission about great Easter-day;
Eighth—And to his Church and his own frolicsome clargy neglect not tides to pay."

"Well," said his reverence, "now, the great point is, do you understand them?"

[1] We subjoin the original for the information of our readers:—
"Confiteor Deo Omnipotenti, beatæ Mariæ, semper Virgini, beato Michælo Archangelo, beato Johanni Baptistæ, sanctis Apostolis Petro et Paulo, omnibus sanctis, et tibi, Pater, quia, peccavi nimis cogitatione, verbo, et opera, mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa." Let not our readers suppose that the above version in the mouth of a totally illiterate peasant is overcharged, for we have the advantage of remembering how we ourselves used to hear it pronounced in our early days. We will back the version in the text against Edward Irving's new language for any money.

"Wid the help of God I hope so, yer rev'rence—and I have also the three thriptological vartues."

"Theological, sirrah!"

"Theojollyological vartues; the four sins that cry to heaven for vingeance; the *five* carnal vartues—prudence, justice, timptation, and solitude;[1] the six holy Christian gifts; the seven deadly sins; the eight grey attitudes ——"

"Grey attitudes! Oh, the Bœotian!" exclaimed his reverence: "listen to the way in which he's playing havoc among them—stop, sir," for Kelly was going on at full speed--"stop, sir; I tell you it's not *grey* attitudes, but *bay* attitudes—doesn't everyone know the eight beatitudes?"

"The eight *bay* attitudes; the nine ways of being guilty of another's sins; the ten commandments; the twelve fruits of a Christian; the fourteen stations of the cross; the fifteen mystheries of the passion——"

"Kelly," said his reverence, interrupting him, and heralding the joke, for so it was intended, with a hearty chuckle, "you're getting fast out of you're teens, ma bouchal!" and this was, of course, honoured with a merry peal, extorted as much by an effort at softening the rigour of examination, as by the traditionary duty which entails upon the Irish laity the necessity of laughing at a priest's jokes, without any reference at all to their quality. Nor was his reverence's own voice the first to subside into that gravity which became the solemnity of the occasion; for, even whilst he continued the interrogatories, his eye was laughing at the conceit, with which it was evident the inner man was not competent to grapple. "Well, Kelly, I can't say but you've answered very well, as far as the *repeating* of them goes: but do you perfectly *understand* all the commandments of the Church?"

"I do, sir," replied Kelly, whose confidence kept pace with his reverence s good humour.

"Well, what is meant by the fifth?"

"The fifth, sir," said the other, rather confounded—"I must begin agin, sir, and go on till I come to it."

"Well," said the priest, "never mind that; but tell us what the eighth means?"

Kelly stared at him a second time, but was not able to advance. "First—Sundays and holidays, mass thou shalt hear;" but before he had proceeded to the second, a person who stood at his elbow began to whisper to him the proper reply, and, in the act of doing so, received a lash of the whip across the ear for his pains.

"You blackguard, you!" exclaimed Father Philemy, "take that—how dare you attempt to prompt any person that *I*'m examining?"

Those who stood round Kelly now fell back to a safe distance, and all was silence, terror, and trepidation once more.

"Come, Kelly, go on—the eighth?"

[1] Temperance and fortitude.

Kelly was still silent.

"Why, you Ninny, you, didn't you repeat it just now. 'Eighth—And to his Church neglect not tithes to pay.' Now that I have put the words in your mouth, what does it mean?"

Kelly having thus got the cue, replied in the words of the catechism, "To pay *tides* to the lawful *pasterns* of the Church, sir."

"*Pasterns!* oh, you ass, you; pasterns! You poor, base, contemptible, crawling reptile; as if we trampled you under our hooves—oh, you scruff of the earth! Stop, I say—it's *pastors*."

"Pasthors of the Church."

"And tell me, do you fulfil that commandment?"

"I do, sir."

"It's a lie, sir," replied the priest, brandishing the whip over his head, whilst Kelly instinctively threw up his guard to protect himself from the blow; "It's a lie, sir," repeated his reverence, "you don't fulfil it. What *is* the Church?"

"The Church is the congregation of the faithful that purfiss the true faith, and are obadient to the pope."

"And who do you pay your tithes to?"

"To the parson, sir."

"And, you poor varmint you, is *he* obadient to the pope?"

Kelly only smiled at the want of comprehension which prevented him from seeing the thing according to the view which his reverence took of it.

"Well, now," continued Father Philemy, "who are the *lawful* pastors of God's Church?"

"You are, sir, and all our own priests."

"And who ought you to pay your tithes to?"

"To you, sir, in coorse; sure I always knew that, yer rev'rence."

"And what's the reason, then, you don't pay them to me instead of the parson?"

This was a puzzler to Kelly, who only knew his own side of the question. "You have me there, sir," he replied with a grin.

"Because," said his reverence, "the Protestants, for the present, have the law of the land on their side, and power over you to compel the payment of tithes to themselves; but we have right, justice, and the law of God on ours; and, if everything was in its proper place, it is not to the *parsons*, but to *us*, that you would pay them."

"Well, well, sir," replied Kelly, who now experienced a community of feeling upon the subject with his reverence that instantly threw him into a familiarity of manner which he thought the point between them justified—"who knows, sir?" said he, with a knowing smile, "there's a good time coming, yer rev'rence."

"Ay," said Father Philemy, "wait till we get once into the Big House, and if we don't turn the scales—if the Established Church doesn't go down, why, there's no truth in Scripture. Now, Kelly, all's right but the money—have you brought your dues?"

"Here it is, sir," said Kelly, handing him his dues for the last year.

It is to be observed here that, according as the penitents went to

be examined, or to kneel down to confess, a certain sum was exacted from each, which varied according to the arrears that might have been due to the priest. Indeed, it is not unusual for the host and hostess, on these occasions, to be refused a participation in the sacrament until they pay this money, notwithstanding the considerable expense they are put to in entertaining not only the clergy, but a certain number of their own friends and relations.

"Well, stand aside, I'll hear you first; and now come up here, you young gentleman, that laughed so heartily a while ago at my joke—ha, ha, ha!—come up here, child."

A lad now approached him whose face, on a first view, had something simple and thoughtless in it, but in which, on a closer inspection, might be traced a lurking, sarcastic humour, of which his reverence never dreamt.

"You're for confession, of course," said the priest.

"*Of coorse*," said the lad, echoing him, and laying a stress upon the word, which did not much elevate the meaning of the blind compliance in general with the rite in question.

"Oh!" exclaimed the priest, recognising him when he approached—"you are Dan Fegan's son, and designed for the Church yourself; you are a good Latinist, for I remember examining you in Erasmus about two years ago—*Quomodo se habet corpus tuum Charum lignum sacerdotis?*"

"*Valde, Domine*," replied the lad, "*Quomodo se habet anima tua, charum exemplar sacer*dotage, *et fulcrum robustissimum Ecclesiæ sacrosanctæ.*"

"Very good, Harry," replied his reverence, laughing—"stand aside; I'll hear you after Kelly."

He then called up a man with a long, melancholy face, which he noticed before to have been proof against his joke, and after making two or three additional fruitless experiments upon his gravity, he commenced a cross fire of peevish interrogatories, which would have excluded him from the "tribunal" on that occasion, were it not that the man was remarkably well prepared, and answered the priest's questions very pertinently.

This over, he repaired to his room, where the work of absolution commenced; and, as there was a considerable number to be rendered sinless before the hour of dinner, he contrived to unsin them with an alacrity that was really surprising.

Immediately after the conversation already detailed, between his reverence and Phaddhy, the latter sought Katty, that he might communicate to her the unlucky oversight which they had committed, in neglecting to provide fresh meat and wine. "We'll be disgraced for ever," said Phaddhy, "without either a bit of mutton or a bottle of wine for the gintlemen, and that Parrah More Slevin had both."

"And I hope," replied Katty, "that you're not so mane as to let any of that faction outdo you in *dacency*, the nagerly set! It was enough for them to bate us in the law-shoot about the horse, and not to have the laugh agin at us about this."

"Well, that same law-shoot is not over with them yet," said Phaddhy; "wait till the spring fair comes, and if I don't have a faction gathered that'll sweep them out of the town, why my name's not Phaddhy! But where is Mat, till we sind him off?"

'Arrah, Phaddhy," said Katty, "wasn't it friendly of Father Philemy to give us the *hard word* about the wine and mutton?"

"Very friendly," retorted Phaddhy, who, after all, appeared to have suspected the priest—"very friendly, indeed, when it's to put a good joint before himself, and a bottle of wine in his jacket. No, no, Katty! it's not altogether for the sake of Father Philemy, but I wouldn't have the neighbours say that I was near and undacent; and, above all things, I wouldn't be worse nor the Slevins—for the same set would keep it up agin us long enough."

Our readers will admire the tact with which Father Philemy worked upon the rival feeling between the factions; but, independently of this, there is a generous hospitality in an Irish peasant which would urge him to any stratagem, were it even the disposal of his only cow, sooner than incur the imputation of a narrow, or, as he himself terms it, "an undacent" or "nagerly" spirit.

In the course of a short time Phaddhy despatched two messengers, one for the wine, and another for the mutton; and, that they might not have cause for any unnecessary delay, he gave them the two reverend gentlemen's horses, ordering them to spare neither whip nor spur until they returned. This was an agreeable command to the messengers, who, as soon as they found themselves mounted, made a bet of a "trate," to be paid on arriving in the town to which they were sent, to him who should first reach a little stream that crossed the road at the entrance of it, called the "pound burn." But I must not forget to state that they not only were mounted on the priests' horses, but took their great-coats, as the day had changed and threatened to rain. Accordingly, on getting out upon the main road, they set off, whip and spur, at full speed, jostling one another and cutting each other's horse as if they had been intoxicated; and the fact is that, owing to the liberal distribution of the bottle that morning, they were not far from it.

"Bliss us!" exclaimed the country people, as they passed, "what on airth can be the matther with Father Philemy and Father Con, that they're abusing wan another at sich a rate!"

"Oh!" exclaimed another, "it's apt to be a sick call, and they're thrying to be there before the body grows cowld."

"Ay, or maybe," a third conjectured, "it's to ould Magennis, that's on the point of death, and going to lave all his money behind him, and they're striving to see who'll get there first."

But their astonishment was not a whit lessened when, in about an hour afterwards, they perceived them both return; the person who represented Father Con having an overgrown leg of mutton slung behind his back like an Irish harp, reckless of its friction against his reverence's coat, which it had completely saturated with grease, and the duplicate of Father Philemy with a sack over his shoulder,

in the bottom of which was half a dozen of Mr. M'Loughlin's best port.

Phaddhy, in the meantime, being determined to mortify his rival, Parrah More, by a superior display of hospitality, waited upon that personage, and exacted a promise from him to come down and partake of the dinner—a promise which the other was not slack in fulfilling. Phaddhy's heart was now on the point of taking its rest, when it occurred to him that there yet remained one circumstance in which he might utterly eclipse his rival, and that was to ask Captain Wilson, his landlord, to meet their reverences at dinner. He accordingly went over to him, for he only lived a few miles distant, having first communicated the thing privately to Katty, and requested that, as their reverences that day held a station in his house, and would dine there, he would have the kindness to dine along with them. To this the captain, who was intimate with both the clergymen, gave a ready compliance, and Phaddhy returned home in high spirits.

In the meantime the two priests were busy in the work of absolution; the hour of three had arrived, and they had many to shrive: but in the course of a short time a reverend auxiliary made his appearance, accompanied by one of Father Philemy's nephews, who was then about to enter Maynooth. This clerical gentleman had been appointed to a parish, but owing to some circumstances which were known only in the distant part of the diocese where he had resided, he was deprived of it, and had, at the period I am writing of, no appointment in the Church, though he was in full orders. If I mistake not he incurred his bishop's displeasure by being too warm an advocate for domestic nomination—a piece of discipline the re-establishment of which was then attempted by the junior clergymen of the diocese wherein the scene of this station is laid. Be this as it may, he came in time to assist the gentlemen in absolving those penitents (as we must call them so) who still remained unconfessed.

During all this time Katty was in the plenitude of her authority, and her sense of importance manifested itself in a manner that was by no means softened by having been that morning at her duty. Her tones were not so shrill nor so loud as they would have been had not their reverences been within hearing; but what was wanting in loudness was displayed in a firm and decided energy, that vented itself frequently in the course of the day upon the backs and heads of her sons, daughters, and servants, as they crossed her path in the impatience and bustle of her employment. It was truly ludicrous to see her, on encountering one of them in these fretful moments, give him a drive head foremost against the wall, exclaiming, as she shook her fist at him, "Ho, you may bless your stars that *they're* under the roof, or it wou'dn't go so asy wid you; for if goodness hasn't said it, you'll make me lose my sowl this blessed and holy day: but this is still the case—the very time I go to my duty, the devil (between us and harm) is sure to throw fifty temptations acrass me, and to help him, you must come in my way—but wait till to-morrow, and if I don't pay you for this, I'm not here."

That a station is an expensive ordinance to the peasant who is honoured by having one held in his house, no one who knows the characteristic hospitality of the Irish people can doubt. I have reason, however, to think, that since the Church of Rome and her discipline have undergone so rigorous a scrutiny by the advocates of scriptural truth, she has been much more cautious in the manner in which they have been conducted. The policy of Romanism has uniformly been to adapt herself to the circumstances by which she may be surrounded, and as the unbecoming licentiousness, which about twenty, or even so late as fifteen years ago trod so closely upon the heels of a ceremony which the worship of God and the administration of sacramental rites should have in a peculiar manner solemnized, was utterly disgraceful and shocking—she felt that it was expedient, as knowledge advanced around her, to practise a greater degree of external decorum and circumspection, lest her *little ones* should be scandalized. This, however, did not render it necessary that she should effect much reformation on this point in those parts of the kingdom which are exclusively Catholic ; and accordingly stations, with some exceptions in a certain diocese, go on much in the old manner as to the expense which they occasion the people to incur, and the jolly, convivial spirit which winds them up.

About four o'clock the penitents were at length all despatched ; and those who were to be detained for dinner, many of whom had not eaten anything until then, in consequence of the necessity of receiving the Eucharist fasting, were taken aside to taste some of Phaddhy's poteen. Of course, no remorse was felt at the impiety of mingling it so soon with the sacrament they had just received, believing, as they did, the latter to contain the immaculate Deity ; but, indeed, their reverences at breakfast had set them a pretty example on that point. At length the hour of dinner arrived, and along with it the redoubtable Parrah More Slevin, Captain Wilson, and another nephew of Father Philemy's, who had come to know what detained his brother who had conducted the auxiliary priest to Phaddhy's. It is surprising, on these occasions, to think how many uncles, and nephews, and cousins, to the forty-second degree, find it needful to follow their reverences on messages of various kinds ; and it is equally surprising to observe with what exactness they drop in during the hour of dinner. Of course, any blood-relation or friend of the priest's must be received with cordiality ; and consequently they do not return without solid proofs of the good-natured hospitality of poor Paddy, who feels no greater pleasure than in showing his " decency " to any belonging to his reverence.

I daresay it would be difficult to find a more motley and diversified company than sat down to the ungarnished fare which Katty laid before them. There were first, Fathers Philemy, Con, and the auxiliary from the far part of the diocese ; next followed Captain Wilson, Peter Malone, and Father Philemy's two nephews ; after these came Phaddhy himself, Parrah More Slevin, with about two dozen more of the most remarkable and uncouth personages that could sit

down to table. There were besides about a dozen of females, most of whom by this time, owing to Katty's private kindness, and a slight thirst occasioned by the long fast, were in a most independent and placid state of feeling. Father Philemy, *ex officio*, filled the chair—he was a small man, with cherub cheeks as red as roses, black twinkling eyes, and double chin ; was of the fat-headed genus, and, if phrenologists be correct, must have given indications of early piety, for he was bald before his time, and had the organ of veneration standing visible on his crown ; his hair, from having once been black, had become an iron-grey, and hung down behind his ears, resting on the collar of his coat, according to the old school, to which, I must remark, he belonged, having been educated on the Continent. His coat had large double breasts, the lappels of which hung down loosely on each side, being the prototype of his waistcoat, whose double breasts fell downwards in the same manner ; his black small-clothes had silver buckles at the knees, and the gaiters, which did not reach up so far, discovered a pair of white lamb's-wool stockings, somewhat retreating from their original colour.

Father Con was a tall, muscular, able-bodied young man, with an immensely broad pair of shoulders, of which he was vain ; his black hair was cropped close, except a thin portion of it, which was trimmed quite evenly across his eyebrows ; he was rather bow-limbed, and when walking looked upwards, holding out his elbows from his body, and letting the lower parts of his arms fall down, so that he went as if he carried a keg under each ; his coat, though not well made, was of the best glossy broadcloth, and his long clerical boots went up about his knees like a dragoon's ; there was an awkward stiffness about him, in very good keeping with a dark, melancholy cast of countenance, in which, however, a man might discover an air of simplicity not to be found in the visage of his superior, Father Philemy.

The latter gentleman filled the chair, as I said, and carved the goose ; on his right sat Captain Wilson ; on his left, the auxiliary—next to them Father Con, the nephews, Peter Malone, *et cetera*. To enumerate the items of the dinner is unnecessary, as our readers have a pretty accurate notion of them from what we have already said. We can only observe that when Phaddhy saw it laid, and all the wheels of the system fairly set a-going, he looked at Parrah More with an air of triumph which he could not conceal. It is also unnecessary for us to give the conversation in full ; nor, indeed, would we attempt giving any portion of it, seeing it was not very edifying, except for the purpose of showing the spirit in which a religious ceremony, looked upon by its advocates as one of particular solemnity, is too frequently closed.

The talk in the beginning was altogether confined to the clergymen and Mr. Wilson, including a few diffident contributions from "Pether Malone," and the "two nephews."

"Mr. M'Guirk," observed Captain Wilson, after the conversation had taken several turns, "I'm sure that in the course of your professional duties, sir, you must have had occasion to make many

observations upon human nature, from the circumstance of seeing it in every condition and state of feeling possible; from the baptism of the infant, until the aged man receives the last rites of your Church and the sweet consolations of religion from your hand."

"Not a doubt of it, Phaddhy," said Father Philemy to Phaddhy, whom he had been addressing at the time, "not a doubt of it; and I'll do everything in my power to get him in too, and I am told he is bright."

"Uncle," said one of the nephews, "this gentleman is speaking to you."

"And why not?" continued his reverence, who was so closely engaged with Phaddhy that he did not hear even the nephew's appeal —"a bishop—and why not? Has he not as good a chance of being a bishop as any of them? though, God knows, it is not always merit that gets a bishopric in any church, or I myself might——But let *that* pass," said he, fixing his eyes on the bottle.

"Father Philemy," said Father Con, "Captain Wilson was addressing himself to you in a most especial manner."

"Oh! Captain, I beg ten thousand pardons. I was engaged talking with Phaddhy here about his son, who is a young shaving of our cloth, sir; he is intended for the *mission*. Phaddhy, I will either examine him myself, or make Father Con examine him, by-and-by. Well, captain?"

The Captain now repeated what he had said.

"Very true, Captain, and we do see it in as many shapes as ever—Con, what do you call him?—put on him."

"Proteus," subjoined Con, who was famous at the classics.

Father Philemy nodded for the assistance, and continued: "But as for human nature, Captain, give it to me at a good roasting christening; or, what is better again, at a jovial wedding between two of my own parishioners—say this pretty, fair-haired daughter of Phaddhy Sheemus Phaddhy's here, and long Ned Slevin, Parrah More's son there—eh, Phaddhy, will it be a match?—what do you say, Parrah More? Upon my veracity I must bring that about."

"Why, then, yer reverence," replied Phaddhy, who was now a little softened, and forgot his enmity against Parrah More for the present, "unlikelier things might happen."

"It won't be my fault," said Parrah More, "if my son Ned has no objection."

"*He* object!" replied Father Philemy, "if *I* take it in hand, let me see who'll dare to object; doesn't the scripture say it? and sure we can't go against the scripture."

"By-the-by," said Captain Wilson, who was a dry humourist, "I am happy to be able to infer from what you say, Father Philemy, that you are not, as the clergymen of your Church are supposed to be, inimical to the Bible."

"Me an enemy to the Bible! no such thing, sir; but, Captain, begging your pardon, we'll have nothing more about the Bible: you see we are met here, as friends and good fellows, to enjoy ourselves

after the severity of our spiritual duties, and we must relax a little; we can't always carry long faces like Methodist parsons—come, Parrah More, let the Bible take a nap, and give us a song."

His reverence was now seconded in his motion by the most of all present, and Parrah More accordingly gave them a song. After a few songs more, the conversation went on as before.

"Now, Parrah More," said Phaddhy, "you must try *my wine;* I hope it's as good as what *you* gave his reverence yesterday."

The words, however, had scarcely passed his lips, when Father Philemy burst out into a fit of laughter, clapping and rubbing his hands in a manner the most astonishing. "Oh, Phaddhy, Phaddhy!" shouted his reverence, laughing heartily, "I *done* you for once—I done you, my man, *cute* as you thought yourself: why, you nager, you, did you think to put us off with punch, and you have a stocking of hard guineas hid in a hole in the wall?"

"What does yer rev'rence mane," said Phaddhy; "for myself can make no undherstanding out of it, at all at all?"

To this his reverence only replied by another laugh.

"*I* gave his reverence no wine," said Parrah More, in reply to Phaddhy's question.

"What!" said Phaddhy, "none yesterday, at the station held with you?"

"Not a bit of me ever thought of it."

"Nor no mutton?"

"Why, then, devil a morsel of mutton, Phaddhy; but we had a rib of beef."

Phaddhy now looked over to his reverence rather sheepishly, with the smile of a man on his face who felt himself foiled. "Well, yer reverence has *done* me, sure enough," he replied, rubbing his head—"I give it up to you, Father Philemy; but, anyhow, I'm glad I got it, and you're all welcome from the core of my heart. I'm only sorry I haven't as much more now to thrate you all like gintlemen; but there's some yet, and as much punch as will make all our heads come round."

Our readers must assist us with their own imaginations, and suppose the conversation to have passed very pleasantly, and the night, as well as the guests, to be somewhat *far gone.* The principal part of the conversation was borne by the three clergymen, Captain Wilson, and Phaddhy; that of the two nephews and Peter Malone ran in an undercurrent of its own; and in the preceding part of the night those who occupied the bottom of the table spoke to each other rather in whispers, being too much restrained by that rustic bashfulness which ties up the tongues of those whe feel that their consequence is overlooked among their superiors. According as the punch circulated, however, their diffidence began to wear off; and occasionally an odd laugh or so might be heard to break the monotony of their silence. The youngsters, too, though at first almost in a state of terror, soon commenced plucking each other; and a titter, or a suppressed burst of laughter, would break forth from one of the more waggish, who was

put to a severe task in afterwards composing his countenance into sufficient gravity to escape detection, and a competent portion of chastisement the next day, for not being able to "b' have himself with betther manners."

During these juvenile breaches of decorum, Katty would raise her arm in a threatening attitude, shake her head at them, and look up at the clergy, intimating more by her earnestness of gesticulation than met the ear. Several songs again went round, of which, truth to tell, Father Philemy's were by far the best: for he possessed a rich comic expression of eye, which, added to suitable ludicrousness of gesture and a good voice, rendered him highly amusing to the company. Father Con declined singing, as being decidedly serious, though he was often solicited.

"He!" said Father Philemy, "he's no more voice than a woolpack; but Con's a cunning fellow. What do you think, Captain Wilson, but he pretends to be too pious to sing, and gets credit for piety—not because he is devout, but because he has a bad voice; now, Con, you can't deny it, for there's not a man in the three kingdoms knows it better than myself; you sit there with a face upon you that might go before the Lamentations of Jeremiah the Prophet, when you ought to be as jovial as another."

"Well, Father Philemy," said Phaddhy, "as he won't sing, maybe, wid submission, he'd examine Briney in his Latin, till his mother and I hear how he's doing at it."

"Ay, he's fond of dabbling at Latin, so he may try him—I'm sure I have no objection —— So, Captain, as I was telling you ——"

"Silence there below!" said Phaddhy to those at the lower end of the table, who were now talkative enough; "will yees whisht there till Father Con hears Briney a lesson in his Latin. Where are you, Briney? come here, ma bouchal."

But Briney had absconded when he saw that the tug of war was about to commence. In a few minutes, however, the father returned, pushing the boy before him, who, in his reluctance to encounter the ordeal of examination, clung to every chair, table, and person in his way, hoping that his restiveness might induce them to postpone the examination till another occasion. The father, however, was inexorable, and by main force dragged him from all his holds and placed him beside Father Con.

"What's come over you, at all at all, you insignified *shingawn*, you, to affront the gintleman in this way, and he kind enough to go for to give you an *examination?*—come now, you had betther not vex me, I tell you, but hould up your head and spake out loud, that we can all hear you: now, Father Con, achora, you'll not be too hard upon him in the beginning, till he gets into it, for he's aisy dashed."

"Here, Briney," said Father Philemy, handing him his tumbler, "take a pull of this, and if you have any courage at all in you it will raise it; take a good pull."

Briney hesitated.

"Why, but you take the glass out of his reverence's hand, sarrah,"

said the father—"what! is it without dhrinking his reverence's health first!"

Briney gave a most melancholy nod at his reverence, as he put the tumbler to his mouth, which he nearly emptied, notwithstanding his shyness.

"For my part," said his reverence, looking at the almost empty tumbler, "I am pretty sure that that same chap will be able to take care of himself through life. And so, Captain ——" said he, resuming the conversation with Captain Wilson, for his notice of Briney was only parenthetical.

Father Con now took the book, which was Æsop's Fables, and, in accordance with Briney's intention, it opened exactly at the favourite fable of Gallus Gallinaceus. He was not aware, however, that Briney had kept that place open during the preceding part of the week, in order to effect this point. Father Philemy, however, was now beginning to relate another anecdote to the captain, and the thread of his narrative twined rather ludicrously with that of the examination.

Briney, after a few hems, at length proceeded—"*Gallus Gallinaceus*, a dunghill cock ——"

"So, Captain, I was just after coming out of Widow Moylan's—it was in the Lammas fair—and a large one, by-the-by, it was—so, sir, who should come up to me but Branagan. 'Well, Branagan,' said I, 'how does the world go now with you?'——"

"*Gallus Gallinaceus*, a dunghill cock ——"

"—— Says he. 'And how is that?' says I ——"

"*Gallus Gallinaceus* ——"

"—— Says he. 'Hut tut, Branagan,' says I — 'you're drunk.' 'That's the thing, sir,' says Branagan, 'and I want to explain it all to your reverence.' 'Well,' said I, 'go on'——"

"*Gallus Gallinaceus*, a dunghill cock ——"

"—— Says he——Let your *Gallus Gallinaceus* go to roost for this night, Con," said Father Philemy, who did not relish the interruption of his story. "I say, Phaddhy, send the boy to bed, and bring him down in your hand to my house on Saturday morning, and we will both examine him, but this is no time for it, and me engaged in conversation with Captain Wilson. So, Captain —— 'Well, sir,' says Branagan, and he staggering, 'I took an oath against liquor, and I want your reverence to break it,' says he. 'What do you mean?' I inquired. 'Why, please your reverence,' said he, 'I took an oath against liquor, as I told you, not to drink more nor a pint of whisky in one day, and I want your reverence to break it for me, and make it only half a pint; for I find that a pint is too much for me; by the same token, that when I get that far, your reverence, I disremember the oath entirely.'"

The influence of the bottle now began to be felt, and the conversation absolutely blew a gale, wherein hearty laughter, good strong singing, loud argument, and general good-humour blended into one uproarious peal of hilarity, accompanied by some smart flashes of wit and humour, which would not disgrace a prouder banquet.

Phaddhy, in particular, melted into a spirit of the most unbounded benevolence—a spirit that would (if by any possible means he could effect it) embrace the whole human race; that is to say, he would raise them—man, woman, and child—to the same elevated state of happiness which he enjoyed himself. That, indeed, was happiness in perfection, as pure and unadulterated as the poteen which created it. How could he be otherwise than happy?—he had succeeded to a good property and a stocking of hard guineas, without the hard labour of acquiring them; he had the "clargy" under his roof at last, partaking of a hospitality which he felt himself well able to afford them; he had settled with his reverence for five years' arrears of sin, all of which had been wiped out of his conscience by the blessed absolving hand of the priest; he was training up Briney for the Mission, and, though last not least, he was—far gone in his seventh tumbler!

"Come, jinteels," said he, "spare nothing here—there's lashings of everything; thrate yourselves dacent, and don't be saying to-morrow or next day that ever my father's son was nagerly. Death alive, Father Con, what are you doin'? Why, then, bad manners to me if that'll sarve, anyhow."

"Phaddhy," replied Father Con, "I assure you I have done my duty."

"Very well, Father Con, granting all that, it's no sin to repate a good turn, you know. Not a word I'll hear, yer reverence—one tumbler along with myself, if it was only for ould times." He then filled Father Con's tumbler, with his own hand, in a truly liberal spirit. "Arrah, Father Con, do you remember the day we had the leapin'-match, and the bout at the shoulder-stone?"

"Indeed, I'll not forget it, Phaddhy."

"And it's yourself that may say that; but I bleeve I rubbed the consate off of your reverence—only that's betune ourselves, you persave."

"You did win the palm, Phaddhy, I'll not deny it; but you are the only man that ever *bet* me at either of the athletics."

"And I'll say this for yer reverence, that you are one of the best and most able-bodied gintlemen I ever engaged with. Ah! Father Con, I'm past all that now—but no matter, here's yer reverence's health, and a shake hands; Father Philemy, yer health, docthor: yer strange reverence's health—Captain Wilson, not forgetting you, sir: Mr. Pether, yours; and I hope to see you soon with the robes upon you, and to be able to prache us a good sarmon. Parrah More—*wus dha lauv*[1]—give me yer hand, you steeple, you; and I haven't the smallest taste of objection to what Father Philemy hinted at—ye'll obsarve. Katty, you thief o' the world, where are you? Your health, avourneen; come here, and give us your fist, Katty: bad manners to me if I could forget you afther all;—the best crathur, your reverence, undher the sun, except when yer reverence puts yer *comedher* on her at confession, and then she's a little sharp or so, not a doubt of it; but no matther,

[1] The translation follows it.

Katty ahagur, you do it all for the best. And Father Philemy, maybe it's myself didn't put the thrick upon you in the Maragy More, about Katty's death—ha, ha, ha! Jack M'Cramer, yer health—all yer healths, and yer welcome here, if you war seven times as many. Briney, where are you, ma bouchal? Come up and shake hands wid yer father, as well as another—come up, acushla, and kiss me. Ah, Briney, my poor fellow, ye'll never be the cut of a man yer father was; but no matther, avourneen, ye'll be a betther man, I hope; and God knows you may asy be that, for, Father Philemy, I'm not what I ought to be, yer reverence; however, I may mend, and will, maybe, before a month of Sundays goes over me: but, for all that, Briney, I hope to see the day when you'll be sitting, an ordained priest, at my own table; if I once saw that, I could die contented—so mind yer larning, acushla, and his reverence here will back you, and make intherest to get you into the college. Musha, God pity them crathurs at the door—aren't they gone yet? Listen to them coughin', for fraid we'd forget them: and throth and they won't be forgot this bout, anyhow—Katty, avourneen, give them everyone, bit and little, young and ould, their skinfull—don't lave a wrinkle in them; and see, take one of them bottles—the crathurs, they're starved sitting there all night in the could—and give them a couple of glasses apiece—it's good, yer reverence, to have the poor body's blessing at all times; and now, as I was saying, Here's all yer healths! *and from the very veins of my heart yer welcome here.*"

Our readers may perceive that Phaddhy

> "Was not only blest, but glorious,
> O'er a' the ills o' life victorious;

for, like the generality of our peasantry, the native drew to the surface of his character those warm, hospitable, and benevolent virtues which a purer system of morals and education would most certainly keep in full action, without running the risk, as in the present instance, of mixing bad habits with frank, manly, and generous qualities.

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"I'll not go, Con—I tell you I'll not go till I sing another song. Phaddhy, you're a prince—but where's the use of lighting more candles now, man, than you had in the beginning of the night? Is Captain Wilson gone? Then peace be with him; it's a pity he wasn't on the right side, for he's not the worst of them. Phaddhy, where are you?"

"Why, yer reverence," replied Katty, "he's got a little unwell, and jist laid down his head a bit."

"Katty," said Father Con, "you had better get a couple of the men to accompany Father Philemy home; for, though the night's clear, he doesn't see his way very well in the dark—poor man, his eyesight's failing him fast."

"Then the more's the pity, Father Con. Here, Denis, let yourself and Mat go home wid Father Philemy."

"Good night, Katty," said Father Con—"Good night: and may our blessing *sanctify* you all!"

"Good night, Father Con, ahagur," replied Katty; "and for goodness' sake see that they take care of Father Philemy, for it's himself that's the blessed and holy crathur, and the pleasant gintleman, out and out."

"Good night, Katty," again repeated Father Con, as the cavalcade proceeded in a body—"Good night!" And so ended the station.

THE MIDNIGHT MASS.

FRANK M'KENNA was a snug farmer, frugal and industrious in his habits, and, what is rare amongst most men of his class, addicted to neither drink nor quarrelling. He lived at the skirt of a mountain, which ran up in long successive undulations, until it ended in a dark, abrupt peak, very perpendicular on one side, and always, except on a bright day, capped with clouds. Before his door lay a hard plain, covered only with a kind of bent, and studded with round grey rocks, protruding somewhat above its surface. Through this plain, over a craggy channel, ran a mountain torrent, that issued, to the right of M'Kenna's house, from a rocky and precipitous valley, which twisted itself round the base of the mountain until it reached the perpendicular side, where the peak actually overhung it. On looking either from the bottom of the valley or the top of the peak the depth appeared immense; and on a summer's day, when the blackthorns and other hardy shrubs that in some places clothed its rocky sides were green, to view the river sparkling below you in the sun, as it flung itself over two or three cataracts of great depth and boldness, filled the mind with those undefinable sensations of pleasure inseparable from a contemplation of the sublimities of nature. Nor did it possess less interest when beheld in the winter storm. Well do we remember, though then ignorant of our own motives, when we have, in the turmoil of the elements, climbed its steep, shaggy sides, disappearing like a speck, or something not of earth, among the dark clouds that rolled over its summit, for no other purpose than to stand upon its brow, and look down on the red torrent dashing with impetuosity from crag to crag, whilst the winds roared and the clouds flew in dark columns around us, giving to the natural wildness of the place an air of wilder desolation. Beyond this glen the mountains stretched away for eight or ten miles in swelling masses, between which lay many extensive sweeps, well sheltered and abundantly stocked with game, particularly with hares and grouse. M'Kenna's house stood, as I said, at the foot of this mountain, just where the yellow surface of the plain began to darken into the deeper

hues of the heath ; to the left lay a considerable tract of stony land in a state of cultivation ; and beyond the river, exactly opposite the house, rose a long line of hills, studded with houses, and in summer diversified with fallow, pasture, and corn fields, the beauty of which was heightened by the columns of smoke that slanted across the hills, as the breeze carried them through the lucid haze of the atmosphere.

M'Kenna's family consisted of himself, his wife, two daughters, and two sons. One of these was a young man addicted to drink, idle, ill-tempered, and disobedient ; seldom taking a part in the labours of the family, but altogether devoted to field sports, fairs, markets, and dances. In many parts of Ireland it is usual to play at cards for mutton, loaves, fowls, or whisky, and he was seldom absent from such gambling parties, if held within a reasonable distance. Often had the other members of the family remonstrated with him on his idle and immoral courses ; but their remonstrances only excited his bad passions, and produced, on his part, angry and exasperating language, or open determinations to abandon the family altogether and enlist. For some years he went on in this way, a hardened, ungodly profligate, spurning the voice of reproof and of conscience, and insensible to the entreaties of domestic affection, or the commands of parental authority. Such was his state of mind and mode of life when our story opens.

At the time in which the incidents contained in this sketch took place, the peasantry of Ireland, being less encumbered with heavy rents, and more buoyant in spirits than the decay of national prosperity has of late permitted them to be, indulged more frequently, and to a greater stretch, in those rural sports and festivities so suitable to their natural love of humour and amusement. Dances, wakes, and weddings were then held according to the most extravagant forms of ancient usage ; the people were easier in their circumstances, and consequently indulged in them with lighter hearts and a stronger relish for enjoyment. When any of the great festivals of their religion approached, the popular mind, unrepressed by poverty and national dissension, gradually elevated itself to a species of wild and reckless mirth, productive of incidents irresistibly ludicrous and remarkably characteristic of Irish manners. It is not, however, to be expected that a people whose love of fighting is so innate a principle in their disposition should celebrate these festive seasons without an occasional crime, which threw its deep shadow over the mirthful character of their customs. Many such occurred ; but they were looked upon then with a degree of horror and detestation of which we can form but a very inadequate idea at present.

It was upon the advent of one of those festivals—Christmas—that the family of M'Kenna, like every other family in the neighbourhood, were making preparations to celebrate it with the usual hilarity. They cleared out their barn in order to have a dance on Christmas Eve, and for this purpose the two sons and the servant man wrought with that kind of industry produced by the cheerful prospect of some happy event. For a week or fortnight before the evening on which

the dance was appointed to be held, due notice of it had been given to the neighbours, and, of course, there was no doubt but that it would be numerously attended.

Christmas Eve, as the day preceding Christmas is called, has been always a day of great preparation and bustle. Indeed, the whole week previous to it is also remarkable, as exhibiting the importance attached by the people to those occasions on which they can give a loose to their love of fun and frolic. The farmhouse undergoes a thorough cleansing. Father and sons are, or rather used to be, all engaged in repairing the out-houses, patching them with thatch where it was wanted, mending mangers, paving stable floors, fixing cow-stakes, making boraghs,[1] removing nuisances, and cleaning streets.

On the other hand, the mothers, daughters, and maids were also engaged in their several departments; the latter scouring the furniture with sand; the mother making culinary preparations, baking bread, killing fowls, or salting meat, whilst the daughters were unusually intent upon the decoration of their own dress, and the making up of the family linen. All, however, was performed with an air of gaiety and pleasure; the ivy and holly were disposed about the dressers and collar beams with great glee; the chimneys were swept amidst songs and laughter; many bad voices, and some good ones, were put in requisition; whilst several, who had never been known to chaunt a stave, alarmed the listeners by the grotesque and incomprehensible nature of their melody. Those who were inclined to devotion—and there is no lack of it in Ireland—took to carols and hymns, which they sang, for want of better airs, to tunes highly comic. We have ourselves often heard the Doxology sung in Irish verse to the facetious air of "Paudeen O'Rafferty," and other hymns to the tune of "Peas upon a Trencher," and "Cruskeen Lawn." Sometimes, on the contrary, many of them, from the very fulness of jollity, would become pathetic, and indulge in those touching old airs of their country which may be truly called songs of sorrow, from the exquisite and simple pathos with which they abound. This, though it may seem anomalous, is but natural; for there is nothing so apt to recall to the heart those friends, whether absent or dead, with whom it has been connected, as a stated festival. Affection is then awakened, and summons to the hearth where it presides those on whose faces it loves to look. If they be living, it places them in the circle of happiness which surrounds it; and if they be removed for ever from such scenes, their memory, which, amidst the din of ordinary life, has almost passed away, is now restored, and their loss felt as if it had been only just then sustained.

For this reason, at such times, it is not at all unusual to see the elders of Irish families touched by pathos as well as humour. The Irish are a people whose affections are as strong as their imaginations are vivid; and, in illustration of this, we may add that many a time have we seen them raised to mirth and melted into tears, almost at the

[1] The rope with which a cow is tied in the cow-house.

same time, by a song of the most comic character. The mirth, however, was for the song, and the sorrow for the memory of some beloved relation who had been remarkable for singing it, or with whom it had been a favourite.

We do not affirm that in the family of the M'Kennas there were, upon the occasion which we are describing, any tears shed. The enjoyments of the season, and the humours of the expected dance, both combined to give them a more than usual degree of mirth and frolic. At an early hour all that was necessary for the due celebration of that night and the succeeding day had been arranged and completed. The whisky had been laid in, the Christmas candles bought, the barn cleared out, the seats laid; in short, everything in its place, and a place for everything. About one o'clock, however, the young members of the family began to betray some symptoms of uneasiness; nor was M'Kenna himself, though the *farithee*, or man of the house, altogether so exempt from what they felt, as might, if the cause of it were known to our readers, be expected from a man of his years and experience.

From time to time one of the girls tripped out as far as the stile before the door, where she stood looking in a particular direction, until her sight was fatigued.

"Och, och," her mother exclaimed during her absence, "but that colleen's sick about Barny!—musha, but it would be the beautiful joke, all out, if he'd disappoint the whole of yees. Faix, it wouldn't be unlike the same man, to go to wherever he can make most money; and sure small blame to him for that: what's one place to him more than another?"

"Hut," M'Kenna replied, rising, however, to go out himself, "the girsha's makin' a *bauliore*[1] of herself."

"An' where's yourself slippin' out to?" rejoined his wife, with a wink of shrewd humour at the rest. "I say, Frank, are *you* goin' to look for him too? Mavrone, but that's sinsible! Why, thin, you snakin' ould rogue, is that the way wid you? Throth I have often hard it said that 'one fool makes many;' but sure enough, 'an ould fool's worse nor any.' Come in here this minute, I say—walk back—you to have your horn up!—Faix, indeed!"

"Why, I am only goin' to get the small phaties boiled for the pigs, poor crathurs, for their Christmas dinner. Sure we oughtn't to neglect thim no more nor ourselves, the crathurs, that can't spake their wants except by gruntin'."

"Saints above!—the Lord forgive me for bringin' down *their* names upon a Christmas Eve!—but it's beside himself the man is!—an' him knows that the phaties wor boiled an' made up in balls for them arly this mornin'!"

In the meantime the wife's good-natured attack upon her husband produced considerable mirth in the family. In consequence of what she said, he hesitated; but ultimately was proceeding towards the

[1] A laughing-stock.

door, when the daughter returned, her brow flushed, and her eye sparkling with mirth and delight.

"Ha!" said the father, with a complacent smile, "all's right, Peggy; you seen him, alanna. The music's in your eye, acushla; an' the feet of you can't keep themselves off o' the ground; an' all bekase you seen Barny *Dhal* pokin' acrass the fields, wid his head up, an' his skirt stickin' out behind him wid Granua Waile."[1]

The father had conjectured properly, for the joy which animated the girl's countenance could not be misunderstood.

"Barny's comin'," she exclaimed, clapping her hands with great glee, "an' our Frank wid him; they're at the river, and Frank has him on his back, and Granua Waile undher his arm! Come out, come out! You'll die for good, lookin' at them staggerin' acrass. I knew he'd come! I knew it! God be good to thim that invinted Christmas; it's a brave time, faix!"

In a moment the inmates were grouped before the door, all anxious to catch a glimpse of Barny and Granua Waile.

"Faix, ay! Sure enough. Sarra doubt of it! Whethen, I'd never mistrust Barny!" might be heard in distinct exclamations from each.

"Faith, he's a Trojan," said the *farithee*, "an' must get lashins of the best we have. Come in, childher, an' red the hob for him.

"Och, Christmas comes but wanst a year,
An' Christmas comes but wanst a year;
An' the divil a mouth
Shall be friends wid drouth,
While I have whisky, ale, or beer.

"Och, Christmas comes but wanst a year
An' Christmas comes but wanst a year
Wid han' in han',
An' can to can,
Then Hi for the whisky, ale, an' beer.

"Och, Christmas comes but wanst a year,
An' Christmas comes but wanst a year:
Then the high an' the low
Shall shake their toe,
When prim'd wid whisky, ale, an' beer.

For all that, the sorra fig I care for either ale or beer, barrin' in regard of mere drouth; give me the whisky. Eh, Alley—won't we have a jorum anyhow?"

"Why, thin," replied the wife, "the devil be from me (the crass about us for namin' him) but you're a greater *Brinoge* than some of your childher! I suppose it's *your* capers Frank has in him. Will you behave yourself, you ould slingpoke? Behave, I say, an' let me go. Childher, will you help me to flake this man out o' the place? Look at him, here, caperin' an' crackin' his fingers afore me, an' pullin me out to dance!"

"Och, och, murdher alive," exclaimed the good man, out of breath,

[1] His fiddle.

"I seen the day, anyway! An', maybe, could show a step or two yet, if I was well vexed. You can't forget ould times, Alley? Eh, you thief?"

"Musha, have sinse, man alive," replied the wife, in a tone of placid gravity, which only betrayed the pleasure she herself felt in his happiness. "Have sinse, an' the strange man comin' in, an' don't let him *see* you in sich figaries."

The observation of the good woman produced a loud laugh among them. "Arrah, what are yees laughin' at?" she inquired.

"Why, mother," said one of her daughters, "how could Barny *Dhal*, a blind man, *see* anybody?"

Alley herself laughed at her blunder, but wittily replied, "Faith, avourneen, maybe he can often see as nately through his ear as you can do wid your eyes open; sure they say he can hear the grass growin'."

"For that matther," observed the *farithee*, joining in the joke, "he can see as far as any of us—while we're asleep."

The conversation was thus proceeding, when Barny *Dhal* and young Frank M'Kenna entered the kitchen.

In a moment all hands were extended to welcome Barny: "*Millia failte ghud*, Barny!" "*Cead millia failte ghud*, Barny!" "Oh, Barny, did you come at last?" "You're welcome, Barny!" "Barny, my Trojan, how is every cart-load of you?" "How is Granua Waile, Barny?"

"Why thin, holy music, did you never see Barny *Dhal* afore? Clear off from about me, or, by the sweets of rosin, I'll play the devil an' brake things. 'You're welcome, Barny!'—an' 'How are you, Barny?' Why thin, piper o' Moses, don't I know I'm welcome, an' yit you must be tellin' me what everybody knows! But sure I have great news for you all!"

"What is that, Barny?"

"Well, but can yees keep a sacret? Can yees, girls?"

"Faix can we, Barny, achora."

"Well, so can I—ha, ha, ha! Now are yees sarved? Come, let me to the hob."

"Here, Barny; I'll lead you, Barny."

"No, I *have* him; come, Barny, *I'll* lead you: here, achora, this is the spot—that's it. Why, Barny," said the arch girl, as she placed him in the corner, "sorra one o' the hob but knows you: it never stirs—ha, ha, ha!"

"Throth, a colleen, that tongue o' yours will delude some one afore long, if it hasn't done so already."

"But how is Granua Waile, Barny?"

"Poor Granua is it? Faith, times is hard wid her often. 'Granua,' says I to her, 'what do you say, acushla? we're axed to go to two or three places to-day—what do you say? Do you lead, an' I'll follow: your will is my pleasure.' 'An' where are we axed to?' says Granua, sinsible enough. 'Why,' says I, 'to Paddy Lanigan's, to Mike Hartigan's, to Jack Lynch's, an', at the heel o' the hunt, to Frank

M'Kenna's, of the Mountain Bar.' 'By my song,' says she, '*you* may go where you plase; for me, *I'm* off to Frank M'Kenna's, one of the dacentest men in Europe, an' his wife the same. Divil a toe I'll set a waggin' in any other place this night,' says she, 'for 'tis there we're both well thrated wid the best the house can afford. So,' says she, 'in the name of all that's musical, you're welcome to the poker an' tongs anywhere else: for me, I'm off to Frank's.' An' faith, sure enough, she took to her pumps; an' it was only comin' over the hill there that young Frank an' I overtuck her: divil a lie in it."

In fact, Barny, besides being a fiddler, was a *shanahus* of the first water; could tell a story or trace a genealogy as well as any man living, and draw the long bow in either capacity much better than he could in the practice of his more legitimate profession.

"Well, here she is, Barny, to the fore," said the aforesaid arch girl, "an' now give us a tune."

"What!" replied the *farithee*, "is it widout either aitin' or dhrinkin'? Why the girsha's beside herself! Alley, aroon, get him the linin', an' a sup to tighten his elbow."

The good woman instantly went to provide refreshments for the musician.

"Come, girls," said Barny, "will yees get me a scythe or a handsaw."

"A scythe or a handsaw! ethen what to do, Barny?"

"Why, to pare my nail, to be sure," replied Barny, with a loud laugh; "but stay—come back here—I'll make shift to do wid a pair of scissors this bout.

"The paarent finds his sons,
The tutherer whips them;
The nailer makes his nails,
The fiddler clips them."

Wherever Barny came there was mirth, and a disposition to be pleased, so that his jokes always told.

"Musha, the sorra *pare* you, Barny," said one of the girls, "but there's no bein' up to you, good or bad."

"The sorra *pair* me, is it? faix, Nancy, you'll soon be paired yourself wid some one, avourneen. Do you know a sartin young man wid a nose on him runnin' to a point like the pin of a sun-dial, his knees brakin' the king's pace, strikin' one another ever since he was able to walk, an' that was about four years afther he could say his *Pather Nosther;* an' faith, whatever you may think, there's no makin' them paceable except by puttin' between them! The wrong side of his shin, too, is foremost; an' though the one-half of his two feet is all heels, he keeps the same heels for set days an' bonfire nights, an' savinly walks on his ankles. His leg, too, Nancy, is stuck in the middle of his foot, like a poker in a pickaxe; an', along wid all, ——"

"Here, Barny, thry your hand at this," said the good woman, who had not heard his ludicrous description of her fictitious son-in-law—"*eeh arran agus bee laudher*, Barny, ate bread an' be strong. I'll warrant when you begin to play they'll give you little time to do

anything but scrape away;—taste the dhrink first, anyway, in the name o' God,"—and she filled him a glass.

"Augh, augh! faith you're the moral of a woman. Are you there, M'Kenna?—here's a sudden disholution to your family! May they be scattered wid all speed—manin' the girls—to all corners o' the parish!—ha, ha, ha! Well, *that* won't vex them, anyhow; an' next, here's a merry Chris'mas to us, an' many o' them! Whooh! blur-an'-age!—whooh! oh, by gorra!—that's—that's—Frank run afther my breath—I've lost it—run, you tory: oh, by gor, that's stuff as sthrong as Sampson, so it is. Arrah, what well do you dhraw that from? for, faith, 'twould be mighty convanient to live near it in a hard frost."

Barny was now silent for some time, which silence was produced by the industry he displayed in assailing the substantial refreshments before him. When he had concluded his repast he once more tasted the liquor, after which he got Granua Waile, and continued playing their favourite tunes, and amusing them with anecdotes, both true and false, until the hour drew nigh when his services were expected by the young men and maidens who had assembled to dance in the barn. Occasionally, however, they took a preliminary step, in which they were joined by a few of their neighbours. Old Frank himself felt his spirits elevated by contemplating the happiness of his children and their young associates.

"Frank," said he, to the youngest of his sons, "go down to Owen Reillaghan's, and tell him an' his family to come up to the dance early in the evenin'. Owen's a pleasant man," he added, "and a good neighbour, but a small thought too strict in his duties. Tell him to come up, Frank, arly I say; he'll have time enough to go to the Midnight Mass afther dancin' the 'Rakes of Ballyshanny,' and the Baltihorum jig; an' maybe he can't do both in style."

"Ay," said Frank, in his jeering manner, "he carries a handy heel at the dancin', and a soople tongue at the prayin'; but let him alone for bringin' the bottom of his glass and his eyebrow acquainted. But if he'd pray less——"

"Go along, *a veehonee*,[1] an' bring him up," replied the father: "you to talk about prayin'! Them that ud catch you at a prayer ought to be showed for the world to wonder at: a man wid two heads an him would be a fool to him. Go along, I say, and do what you're bid."

"I'm goin'," said Frank, "I'm off: but what if he doesn't come? I'll then have my journey for nothin'."

"An' it's good payment for any journey ever you'll make, barrin' it's to the gallows," replied the father, nearly provoked at his reluctance in obeying him: "won't *you* have dancin' enough in the coorse o' the night, for *you'll* not go to the Midnight Mass, and why don't you be off wid you at wanst?"

Frank shrugged his shoulders two or three times, being loth to leave the music and dancing; but on seeing his father about to address him

[1] You profligate.

in sharper language, he went out with a frown on his brows and a half-smothered imprecation bursting from his lips.

He had not proceeded more than a few yards from the door when he met Rody Teague, his father's servant, on his way to the kitchen. "Rody," said he, "isn't this a purty business? My father wantin' to send *me* down to Owen Reillaghan's; when, by the vartue o' my oath, I'd as soon go half-way into hell as to any place where his son, Mike Reillaghan, ud be. How will I manage, Rody?"

"Why," replied Rody, "as to meetin' wid Mike, take my advice and avoid him. And what is more, I'd give up Peggy Gartland for good. Isn't it a mane thing for you, Frank, to be hangin' afther a girl that's fonder of another than she is of yourself. By this and by that, I'd no more do it—awouh! catch me at it—I'd have spunk in me."

Frank's brow darkened as Rody spoke; instead of instantly replying he was silent, and appeared to be debating some point in his own mind on which he had not come to a determination.

"My father didn't hear of the fight between Mike and me?" said he, interrogatively—"do you think he did, Rody?"

"Not to my knowledge," replied the servant; "if he did he wouldn't surely send *you* down; but, talking of the fight, you are known to be a stout, well-fought boy—no doubt of that—still, I say, you'd no right to provoke Mike as you did, who, it's well known, could bate any two men in the parish; and so sign, you got yourself dacently trounced about a girl that doesn't love a bone in your skin."

"He disgraced me, Rody," observed Frank—"I can't rise my head; and you know I was thought by all the parish as good a man as him. No, I wouldn't, this blessed Christmas Eve above us, for all that ever my name is worth, be disgraced by him as I am. But—hould, man—have patience!"

"Throth, and, Frank, that's what *you* never had," said Rody; "and as to bein' disgraced, you disgraced yourself. What right had you to challenge the boy to fight, and to strike him into the bargain, bekase Peggy Gartland danced wid *him* and wouldn't go out wid *you?* Death alive, sure that wasn't *his* fault."

Every word of reproof which proceeded from Rody's lips but strengthened Frank's rage, and added to his sense of shame; he looked first in the direction of Reillaghan's house, and immediately towards the little village in which Peggy Gartland lived.

"Rody," said he, slapping him fiercely on the shoulder, "go in—I've—I've made up my mind upon what I'll do; go in, Rody, and get your dinner; but don't be out of the way when I come back."

"And what have you made up your mind to?" inquired Rody.

"Why, be the sacred Mother o' Heaven, Rody, to—to—be friends wid Mike."

"Ay, there's sinse and rason in that," replied Rody; "and if you'd take my advice you'd give up Peggy Gartland too."

"I'll see you when I come back, Rody; don't be from about the place."

And as he spoke a single spring brought him over the stile at which they held the foregoing conversation.

On advancing he found himself in one of his father's fields, under the shelter of an elder hedge. Here he paused, and seemed still somewhat uncertain as to the direction in which he should proceed. At length he decided; the way towards Peggy Gartland's was that which he took, and as he walked rapidly, he soon found himself at the village in which she lived.

It was now a little after twilight; the night was clear, the moon being in her first quarter, and the clouds through which she appeared to struggle were light and fleecy, but rather cold-looking; such, in short, as would seem to promise a sudden fall of snow. Frank had passed the first two cabins of the village, and was in the act of parrying the attacks of some yelping cur that assailed him, when he received a slap on the back, accompanied by a *gho manhi Dhea ghud, a Franchas, co wul thu guilh a nish, a rogora dhu?*[1]

"Who's this?" exclaimed Frank: "eh! why, Darby More, you suilin' thief o' the world, is this you?"

"Ay, indeed; an' you're goin' down to Peggy's?" said the other, pointing significantly towards Peggy Gartland's house. "Well, man, what's the harm? She may get worse, that is, hopin' still that you'll mend your manners, a bouchal: but isn't your nose out o' joint there, Frank, darlin'?"

"No sich thing at all, Darby," replied Frank, gulping down his indignation, which rose afresh on hearing that the terms on which he stood with Peggy were so notorious.

"Throth but it is," said Darby; "an' to tell the blessed thruth, I'm not sarry that it's out o' joint; for when I tould you to lave the case in *my* hands, along wid a small thrifle o' silver that didn't signify much to you—whoo! not at all; you'd rather play it at cards, or dhrink it, or spind it wid no good. Out o' joint! musha, if ever a man's nose was to be pitied and yours is: why, didn't Mike Reillaghan put it out o' joint twiist? first in regard to Peggy, and secondly by the batin' he gave you an it."

"It's well known, Darby," replied Frank, "that 'twas by a chance blow he did it; and, you know, a chance blow might kill the divil."

"But there was no danger of Mike's gettin' the chance blow," observed the sarcastic vagrant, for such he was.

"Maybe it's afore him," replied his companion: "we'll have another thrial for it, anyhow: but where are you goin' Darby? Is it to the dance?"

"Me! Is it a man wid five holy ordhers an him? No, no! I might go up, maybe, as far as your father's, merely to see the family, only for the night that's in it; but I'm goin' to another frind's place to spind my Chris'mas, an', over an' above, I must go to the Midnight Mass. Frank, change your coorses, an' mend your life, an' don't be the talk o' the parish. Remimber me to the family, an' say I'll see them soon."

"How long will you stop in the neighbourhood?" inquired Frank.

[1] God save you, Frank! Where are you going now, you black rogue?

"Arrah, why, acushla?" replied the mendicant, softening his language.

"I might be wantin' to see you some o' these days," said the other: "indeed, it's not unlikely, Darby; so don't go, anyhow, widout seein' me."

"Ah!" said Darby, "had you taken a fool's advice—but it can't be helped—the harm's done, I doubt; how-an'-ever, for the matther o' that, maybe I have as good as Peggy in my eye for you; by the same token, as the night's could, warm your tooth, avick; there's waker wather nor this in Lough Corr. Sorra sup of it ever I keep for my own use at all, barrin' when I take a touch o' configuration in my bowels, or, maybe, when I'm too long at my prayers; for, God help me, sure I'm but sthrivin,' wid the help of one thing an' another, to work out my salvation as well as I can! Your health, anyhow, an' a merry Chris'mas to you!—not forgettin' myself," he added, putting to his lips a large cow's horn, which he kept slung beneath his arm, like the bugle of a coach-guard, only that this was generally concealed by an outside coat, no two inches of which were of the same material or colour. Having taken a tolerably large draught from this, which, by the way, held near two quarts, he handed it with a smack and a shrug to Frank, who immediately gave it a wipe with the skirt of his coat, and pledged his companion.

"I'll be wantin'," observed Frank, "to see you in the hollydays—faith, that stuff's to be christened yet, Darby—so don't go till we have a dish o' discoorse about somethin' I'll mintion to you. As for Peggy Gartland, I'm done wid her; she may marry ould Nick for me."

"Or you for ould Nick," said the cynic, "which would be nearly the same thing: but go an, avick, an' never heed me; sure I must have my spake—doesn't everybody know Darby More?"

"I've nothin' else to say *now*," added Frank, "and you have my authority to spread it as far as you plase. I'm done wid her: so good night, an' good cuttin'[1] to your horn, Darby!—You damn ould villain!" he subjoined in a low voice, when Darby had got out of his hearing; "surely it's not in yourself, but in the blessed words and things you have about you, that there is any good."

"Musha, good night, Frank, alanna," replied the other; "an' the divil sweep you for a skamin' vagabone, that's a curse to the country, and has kep me out o' more weddins than anyone I ever met wid, by your roguery in puttin' evil between frinds an' neighbours, jist when they'd be ready for the priest to say the words over them! Good won't come of you, you profligate."

The last words were scarcely uttered by the sturdy mendicant, when he turned round to observe whether or not Frank would stop at Larry Gartland's, the father of the girl to whom he had hitherto unsuccessfully avowed his attachment.

"I'd depind on him," said he, in a soliloquy, "as soon as I'd depind upon ice of an hour's growth: an', whether or not, sure as I'm an my

[1] Good cuttin'—May what's in it never fail.

way to Owen Reillaghan's, the father of the dacent boy that he's strivin' to outdo, mayn't I as well watch his motions, anyway?"

He accordingly proceeded along the shadowy side of the street, in order to avoid Frank's eye, should he chance to look back, and quietly dodged on until he fairly saw him enter the house.

Having satisfied himself that the object of Frank's visit to the village was in some shape connected with Peggy Gartland, the mendicant immediately retraced his steps, and at a pace more rapid than usual strided on to Owen Reillaghan's, whither he arrived just in time to secure an excellent Christmas Eve dinner.

In Ireland that description of mendicants which differs so strikingly from the common crowd of beggars as to constitute a distinct species, comprehends within itself as anomalous an admixture of fun and devotion, external rigour and private licentiousness, love of superstition and of good whisky, as might naturally be supposed, without any great stretch of credulity, to belong to men thrown among a people in whom so many extremes of character and morals meet. The known beggar, who goes his own rounds, and has his own walk, always adapts his character to that of his benefactor, whose whims and peculiarities of temper he studies with industry, and generally with success. By this means, joined to a dexterity in tracing out the private history of families and individuals, he is enabled to humour the caprices, to manage the eccentricities, and to touch with a masterly hand the prejudices and particular opinions of his patrons; and this he contrives to do with great address and tact. Such was the character of Darby More, whose person, naturally large, was increased to an enormous size by the number of coats, blankets, and bags with which he was encumbered. A large belt, buckled round his body, contained within its girth much more of money, meal, and whisky than ever met the eye; his hat was exceedingly low in the crown; his legs were cased in at least three pairs of stockings; and in his hand he carried a long *cant*, spiked at the lower end, with which he slung himself over small rivers and dykes, and kept dogs at bay. He was a devotee, too, notwithstanding the whisky-horn under his arm; attending wakes, christenings, and weddings; rubbed for the *rose*[1] and king's evil (for the varlet insisted that he was a seventh son); cured toothaches, colics, and headaches by charms; but made most money by a knack which he possessed of tattooing into the naked breast the representation of Christ upon the cross. This was a secret of considerable value, for many of the superstitious people believed that by having this stained in upon them they would escape unnatural deaths, and be almost sure of heaven.

When Darby approached Reillaghan's house he was considering the propriety of disclosing to his son the fact of his having left his rival with Peggy Gartland. He ultimately determined that it would be proper to do so; for he was shrewd enough to suspect that the wish Frank had expressed of seeing him before he left the country was

[1] A scrofulous swelling.

but a *ruse* to purchase his silence touching his appearance in the village. In this, however, he was mistaken.

"God save the house!" exclaimed Darby, on entering—"God save the house, an' all that's in it! God save it to the north!" and he formed the sign of the cross in every direction to which he turned; "God save it to the south! ✠ to the aiste! ✠ and to the waiste! ✠ Save it upwards! ✠ and save it downwards! ✠ Save it backwards! ✠ and save it forwards! ✠ Save it right! ✠ and save it left! ✠ Save it by night! ✠ save it by day! ✠ Save it here! ✠ save it there! ✠ Save it this way! ✠ an' save it that way! ✠ Save it atin' ✠ ✠ ✠ an' save it drinkin'! ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠. Oxis Doxis Glorioxis—Amin. An' now that I've blessed the place in the name of the nine Patriarchs, how are yees all, man, woman, an' child? An' a merry Christmas to yees, says Darby More!"

Darby, in the usual spirit of Irish hospitality, received a sincere welcome, was placed up near the fire, a plate filled with the best food on the table laid before him, and requested to want nothing for the asking.

"Why, Darby," said Reillaghan, "we expected you long ago: why didn't you come sooner?"

"The Lord's will be done! for ev'ry man has his throubles," replied Darby, stuffing himself in the corner like an epicure: "an' why should a sinner like me, or the likes o' me, be widout thim? 'Twas a dhrame I had last night that kep me. They say, indeed, that dhrames go by contraries, but not always, to my own knowledge."

"And what was the dhrame about, Darby?" inquired Reillaghan's wife.

"Why, ma'am, about some that I see on this hearth, well, an' in good health; may they long live to be so! Oxis Doxis Glorioxis—Amin!" ✠ ✠ ✠

"Blessed Virgin! Darby, sure it would be nothin' bad that's to happen? Would it, Darby?"

"Keep yourself asy on that head. I have widin my own mind the power of makin' it come out for good—I know the prayer for it. Oxis Doxis!" ✠ ✠

"God be praised for that, Darby: sure it would be a terrible business, all out, if anything was to happen. Here's Mike, that was born on Whissle Monday, of all days in the year, an', you know, they say that any child born on that day is to die an unnatural death. We named Mike after St. Michael, that he might purtect him."

"Make yourself asy, I say; don't I tell you I have the prayer to keep it back—hach! hach!—why, there's a bit stuck in my throath, some way! *Wurrah dheelish*, what's this! Maybe you could give me a sup o' dhrink—wather, or anything to moisten the morsel I'm 'atin'? *Wurrah*, ma'am dear, make haste, its goin' agin the breath wid me!"

"Oh, the sorra taste o' wather, Darby," said Owen; "sure this is Christmas Eve, you know; so you see, Darby, for ould acquaintance sake, an' that you may put up an odd prayer now an' thin for us, jist be thryin' this."

Darby honoured the gift by immediate acceptance.

"Well, Owen Reillaghan," said he, "you make me take more o' this stuff nor any man I know ; and particularly by rason that bein' given, wid a blessin', to the ranns, an' prayers, an' holy charms, I don't think it so good ; barrin', indeed, as Father Dannellan towld me, when the wind, by long fastin', gets into my stomach, as was the case to-day, I'm often throubled, God help me, wid a configuration in the —hugh ! ugh !—and thin it's good for me—a little of it."

"This would make a brave powdher-horn, Darby More," observed one of Reillaghan's sons, "if it wasn't so big. What do you keep in it, Darby ?"

"Why, *a villish*, nothin' indeed but a sup o' Father Dannellan's holy wather, that they say, by all accounts, it costs him great trouble to make, by rason that he must fast a long time, and pray by the day, afore he gets himself holy enough to consecrate it."

"It smells like whisky, Darby," said the boy, without any intention, however, of offending him : "it smells very like *poteen*."

"Hould yer tongue, Risthard," said the elder Reillaghan ; "what ud make the honest man have whisky in it ? Didn't he tell you what's in it ?"

"The gorsoon's right enough," replied Darby : "I got the horn from Barny Dalton a couple o' days agone ; 'twas whisky *he* had in it, an' it smells of it sure enough, an' will, indeed, for some time longer. Och ! och ! the heavens be praised, I've made a good dinner ! May they never know want that gave it to me ! Oxis Doxis Glorioxis— Amin !" ✠ ✠ ✠

"Darby, thry this agin," said Reillaghan, offering him another bumper.

"Throth an' I will, thin, for I find myself a great dale the betther of the one I tuck. Well, here's health an' happiness to us, an' may we all meet in heaven ! Risthard, hand me that horn till I be going out to the barn, in ordher to do somethin' for my sowl. The holy wather's a good thing to have about one."

"But the dhrame, Darby ?" inquired Mrs. Reillaghan. "Won't you tell it to us ?"

"Let Mike follow me to the barn," he replied, "an' I'll tell him as much of it as he ought to hear. An' now let all of yees prepare for the Midnight Mass : go there wid proper intintions. an' not to be coortin' or dhrinkin' by the way. We're all sinners, anyway, an' oughtn't to neglect our sowls. Oxis Doxis Glorioxis. Amin !"

He immediately strode, with the horn under his arm, towards the barn, where he knelt, and began his orisons in a tone sufficiently loud to be heard in the kitchen.

When he was gone, Mrs. Reillaghan, who, with the curiosity natural to her sex, and the superstition peculiar to her station in life, felt anxious to hear Darby's dream, urged Mike to follow him forthwith, that he might prevail on him to detail it at full length.

Darby, who knew not exactly what the dream ought to be, replied to Mike's inquiries vaguely.

"Mike," said he, "antil the proper time comes, I can't tell it; but listen: take my advice, an' slip down to Peggy Gartland's by-and-by. I have strong suspicions, if my dhrame is thrue, that Frank M'Kenna has a design upon her. People may be abroad this night widout bein' noticed, by rason o' the Midnight Mass; Frank has friends in Kilnaheery, up behind the mountains: an' the divil might timpt him to bring her there. Keep your eye an him, or rather an Peggy. If my dhrame's true, he was there this night."

"I thought I gave him enough on her account," said Mike. "The poor girl hasn't a day's pace in regard of him; but, plase goodness, I'll soon put an end to it, for I'll marry her durin' the hollydays."

"Go, avick, an' let me finish my *Pudheran Partha:* I have to get through it before the Midnight Mass comes. Slip down, and find out what he was doin'; and when you come back, let me know."

Mike, perfectly aware of young M'Kenna's character, immediately went towards Lisdrum, for so the village where Peggy Gartland lived was called. He felt the danger to be apprehended from the interference of his rival the more acutely, inasmuch as he was not ignorant of the feuds and quarrels which the former had frequently produced between friends and neighbours by the subtle poison of his falsehoods, which were both wanton and malicious. He therefore advanced at an unusually brisk pace, and had nearly reached the village, when he perceived in the distance a person resembling Frank approaching him at a pace nearly as rapid as his own.

"If it's Frank M'Kenna," thought he, "he must pass me, for this is his straight line home."

It appeared, however, that he had been mistaken; for he whom he had supposed to be the object of his enmity crossed the field by a different path, and seemed to be utterly ignorant of the person whom he was about to meet, so far, at least, as a quick, free, unembarrassed step could intimate his unacquaintance with him.

The fact, however, was that Reillaghan, had the person whom he met approached him more nearly, would have found his first suspicions correct. Frank was then on his return from Gartland's, and no sooner perceived Reillaghan, whom he immediately recognised by his great height, than he took another path in order to avoid him. The enmity between these rivals was deep and implacable; aggravated on the one hand by a sense of unmerited injury, and on the other by personal defeat and the bitterest jealousy. For this reason neither of them wished to meet, particularly Frank M'Kenna, who not only hated, but feared his enemy.

Having succeeded in avoiding Reillaghan, the latter soon reached home; but here he found the door closed, and the family, with a single exception, in the barn, which was now nearly crowded with the youngsters of both sexes from the surrounding villages.

Frank's arrival among them gave a fresh impulse to their mirth and enjoyment. His manners were highly agreeable, and his spirits buoyant almost to levity. Notwithstanding the badness of his character in the opinion of the sober, steady, and respectable inhabitants of

the parish, yet he was a favourite with the dissolute and thoughtless, and with many who had not an opportunity of seeing him except in his most favourable aspect. Whether he entertained on this occasion any latent design that might have induced him to assume a frankness of manner, and an appearance of goodhumour, which he did not feel, it is difficult to determine. Be this as it may, he made himself generally agreeable, saw that everyone was comfortable, suggested an improvement in the arrangement of the seats, broke several jests on Barny and Granua Waile—which, however, were returned with interest—and, in fact, acquitted himself so creditably that his father whispered with a sigh to his mother :

" Alley, achora, wouldn't we be the happy family if that misfortunate boy of ours was to be always the thing he appears to be? God help him ! the gommach, if he had sinse, and the fear o' God before him, he'd not be sich a piece o' desate to sthrangers, and sich a divil's limb wid ourselves : but he's young, an' may see his evil coorses in time, wid the help o' God."

" Musha, may God grant it !" exclaimed his mother. "A fine slip he is, if his heart ud only turn to the right thoughts. One can't help feelin' pride out o' him, when they see him actin' wid any kind o' rason."

The Irish dance, like every other assembly composed of Irishmen and Irishwomen, presents the spectator with those traits which enter into our conception of rollicking fun and broad humour. The very arrangements are laughable ; and when joined to the eccentric strains of some blind fiddler like Barny *Dhal*, to the grotesque and caricaturish faces of the men, and the modest, but evidently arch and laughter-loving countenances of the females, they cannot fail to impress an observing mind with the obvious truth that a nation of people so thoughtless and easily directed from the serious and useful pursuits of life to such scenes can seldom be industrious and wealthy, nor, despite their mirth and humour, a happy people.

The barn in which they danced on this occasion was a large one. Around the walls were placed as many seats as could be spared from the neighbours' houses ; these were eked out by sacks of corn laid lengthwise, logs of round timber, old creels, iron pots with their bottoms turned up, and some of them in their usual position. On these were the youngsters seated, many of the "boys" with their sweethearts on their knees, the arms of the fair ones lovingly around their necks ; and, on the contrary, many of the young women with their bachelors on their laps, their own necks also gallantly encircled by the arms of their admirers. Up in a corner sat Barny, surrounded by the seniors of the village, sawing the fiddle with indefatigable vigour, and leading the conversation with equal spirit. Indeed, his laugh was the loudest and his joke the best, whilst, ever and anon, his music became perfectly furious—that is to say, when he rasped the fiddle with a desperate effort "to overtake the dancers," from whom, in the heat of the conversation, he had unwittingly lagged behind.

Dancing in Ireland, like everything else connected with the amuse-

ment of the people, is frequently productive of bloodshed. It is not unusual for crack dancers from opposite parishes, or from distant parts of the same parish, to meet and dance against each other for victory. But as the judges in those cases consist of the respective friends or factions of the champions, their mode of decision may readily be conjectured. Many a battle is fought in consequence of such challenges, the result usually being that not he who has the lightest heel, but the hardest head, generally comes off the conqueror.

While the usual variety of Irish dances—the reel, jig, fling, three-part-reel, four-part-reel, rowly-powly, country-dance, *cotillion*, or cut-along (as the peasantry call it), and minuet, vulgarly minion, and minionet—were going forward in due rotation, our readers may be assured that those who were seated around the walls did not permit the time to pass without improving it. Many an attachment is formed at such amusements, and many a bitter jealousy is excited : the prude and coquette, the fop and rustic Lothario, stand out here as prominently to the eye of him who is acquainted with human nature as they do in similar assemblies among the great : perhaps more so, as there is less art, and a more limited knowledge of intrigue, to conceal their natural character.

The dance in Ireland usually commences with those who sit next the door, from whence it goes round with the sun. In this manner it circulates two or three times, after which the order is generally departed from, and they dance according as they can. This neglect of the established rule is also a fertile source of discord ; for when two persons rise at the same time, if there be not room for both, the right of dancing first is often decided by blows.

At the dance we are describing, however, there was no dissension ; every heart appeared to be not only elated with mirth, but also free from resentment and jealousy. The din produced by the thumping of vigorous feet upon the floor, the noise of the fiddle, the chat between Barny and the little sober knot about him, together with the brisk murmur of the general conversation, and the expression of delight which sat on every countenance, had something in them elevating to the spirits.

Barny, who knew the voices, and even the mode of dancing peculiar to almost everyone in the barn, had some joke for each. When a young man brings out his sweetheart—which he frequently does in a manner irresistibly ludicrous, sometimes giving a spring from the earth, his *caubeen* set with a knowing air on one side of his head, advancing at a trot on tiptoe, catching her by the ear, leading her out to her position, which is "to face the fiddler," then ending by a snap of the fingers, and another spring, in which he brings his heel backwards in contact with his ham ; we say, when a young man brings out his sweetheart, and places her facing the fiddler, he asks her what she will dance ; to which, if she has no favourite tune, she uniformly replies, "Your will is my pleasure." This usually made Barny groan aloud.

"What ails you, Barny?"

"Oh, thin, murdher alive, how little thruth's in this world! 'Your will's my pleasure'! *Baithershin!* but, sowl, if things goes an, it won't be long so!"

"Why, Barny," the young man would exclaim, "is the ravin' fit comin' over you?"

"No, in throth, Jim; *but it's thinkin' of home I am.* How-and-iver, do you go an; but, *naboklish!* What'll you have?"

"'Jig Polthouge,' Barny: but oil your wrist, a bouchal, or Katty will lave us both out o' sight in no time. Whoo! success! clear the coorse. Well done, Barny! That's the go!"

When the youngsters had danced for some time, the fathers and mothers of the village were called upon "to step out." This was generally the most amusing scene in the dance. No excuse is ever taken on such occasions, for, when they refuse, about a dozen young fellows place them, will they nil they, upright upon the floor, from whence neither themselves nor their wives are permitted to move until they dance. No sooner do they commence than they are mischievously pitted against each other by two sham parties, one encouraging the wife, the other cheering on the good man; whilst the fiddler, falling in with the frolic, plays in his most furious style. The simplicity of character, and, perhaps, the lurking vanity of those who are the butts of the mirth on this occasion, frequently heighten the jest.

"Why thin, Paddy, is it strivin' to outdo me you are? Faiks, avourneen, you never seen that day, anyway," the old woman would exclaim, exerting all her vigour.

"Didn't I? Sowl, I'll sober you before I lave the flure, for all that," her husband would reply.

"An' do you forget," she would rejoin, "that the M'Carthy dhrop is in me; ay, an' it's to the good still."

And the old dame would accompany the boast with a fresh attempt at agility; to which Paddy would respond by "cutting the buckle," and snapping his fingers, whilst fifty voices, amidst roars of laughter, were loud in encouraging each.

"Handle your feet, Katty, darlin'—the mettle's lavin' him!"

"Off wid the brogues, Paddy, or she'll do you. That's it; kick off the other, an' don't spare the flure."

"A thousand guineas an Katty! M'Carthy agin Gallagher for ever!—whirroo!"

"Blur alive, the flure's not benefittin' by you, Paddy. Lay an it, man!—That's it!—Bravo!—Whish!—our side agin Europe!"

"Success, Paddy! Why, you could dance the 'Dusty Miller' upon a flure paved wid drawn razures, you're so soople."

"Katty for ever! The blood's in you, Katty; you'll win the day, *a ban choir!*[1] More power to you!"

"I'll hould a quart on Paddy. Heel an' toe, Paddy, you sinner!"

"Right an' left, Katty; hould an, his breath's goin'."

[1] Decent women.

"Right an' wrong, Paddy, you spalpeen. The whisky's an you, man alive; do it dacently, an' don't let me lose the wager."

In this manner would they incite some old man, and, perhaps, his older wife, to prolonged exertion, and keep them bobbing and jigging about amidst roars of laughter, until the worthy couple could dance no longer.

During stated periods of the night those who took the most prominent part in the dance got a plate and hat, with which they went round the youngsters, to make collections for the fiddler. Barny reserved his best and most sarcastic jokes for these occasions; for so correct was his ear that he felt little difficulty in detecting those whose contributions to him were such as he did not relish.

The aptitude of the Irish for enjoying humorous images was well displayed by one or two circumstances which occurred on this night. A few of both sexes, who had come rather late, could get no other seats than the iron pots to which we have alluded. The young women were dressed in white, and their companions, who were also their admirers, exhibited, in proud display, each a brand new suit, consisting of broadcloth coat, yellow buff vests, and corduroy small-clothes, with a bunch of broad silk ribbons standing out at each knee. They were the sons and daughters of respectable farmers, but as all distinctions here entirely ceased, they were fain to rest contented with such seats as they could get, which on this occasion consisted of the pots aforesaid. No sooner, however, had they risen to dance than the house was convulsed with laughter, heightened by the sturdy vigour with which, unconscious of their appearance, they continued to dance. That part of the white female dresses which had come in contact with the pots exhibited a circle like the full moon, and was black as pitch. Nor were their partners more lucky: those who sat on the mouths of the pots had the back part of their dresses streaked with dark circles, equally ludicrous. The mad mirth with which they danced, in spite of their grotesque appearance, was irresistible. This, and other incidents quite as pleasant—such as the case of a wag who purposely sank himself into one of the pots, until it stuck to him through half the dance—increased the laughter, and disposed them to peace and cordiality.

No man took a more active part in these frolics than young Frank M'Kenna. It is true a keen eye might have noticed under his gaiety something of a moody and dissatisfied air. As he moved about from time to time, he whispered something to above a dozen persons who were well known in the country as his intimate companions, young fellows whose disposition and character were notoriously bad. When he communicated the whisper, a nod of assent was given by his confidants, after which it might be remarked that they moved round to the door with a caution that betrayed a fear of observation, and quietly slunk out of the barn, though Frank himself did not immediately follow them. In about a quarter of an hour afterwards Rody came in, gave him a signal, and sat down. Frank then followed his companions, and after a few minutes Rody also disappeared. This

was about ten o'clock, and the dance was proceeding with great gaiety and animation.

Frank's dread of openly offending his parents prevented him from assembling his associates in the dwelling-house; the only convenient place of rendezvous, therefore, of which they could avail themselves, was the stable. Here they met, and Frank, after uncorking a bottle of poteen, addressed them to the following effect:

"Boys, there's great excuse for me, in regard of my fight wid Mike Reillaghan; that you'll all allow. Come, boys, your healths! I can tell yees you'll find this good, the divil a doubt of it; be the same token, that I stole it from my father's Christmas drink; but no matther for that—I hope we'll never do worse. So, as I was sayin', you must bear me out as well as you can, when I'm brought before the Dilegates to-morrow, for challengin' and strikin' a brother.[1] But I think, you'll stand by me, boys?"

"By the tarn-o'-war, Frank, myself will fight to the knees for you."

"Faith, you may depend on *us*, Frank, or we're not to the fore."

"I know it boys: and now for a piece of fun for this night. You see—come, Lanty, tare-an'-ounkers, drink, man alive—you see, wid regard to Peggy Gartland—eh? what the heil! is that a cough?"

"One o' the horses, man—go an."

"Rody, did Darby More go into the barn before you came out of it?"

"Darby More? not he. If he did, I'd a seen him, surely."

"Why, thin, I'd kiss the book I seen him goin' towards the barn as I was comin' into the stable. Sowl, he's a made boy, that; an' if I don't mistake, he's in Mike Reillaghan's intherest. You know devil a sacret can escape him."

"Hut! the prayin' ould crathur was on his way to the Midnight Mass; he thravels slow, and, of coorse, has to set out early; besides, you know, he has Carols, and Bades, and the likes, to sell at the chapel."

"Thrue for you, Rody: why, I thought he might take it into his head to watch my motions, in regard that, as I said, I think him in Mike's intherest."

"Nonsense, man, what the dickens ud bring him into the stable loft? Why, you're beside yourself?"

"Begor, I bleeve so, but no matther. Boys, I want yees to stand to me to-night. I'm given to know for a sartinty that Mike and Peggy will be buckled to durin' the hollydays. Now I wish to get the girl myself; for if I don't get her, may I be ground to atoms if he will."

"Well, but how will you manage? for she's fond of him."

"Why, I'll tell you that. I was over there this evenin', and I understand that all the family is goin' to the Midnight Mass, barrin' herself. You see, while they're all gone to the 'mallet-office,'[2] we'll

[1] Those connected with illegal combinations are sworn to have no private or personal quarrels, not to strike, nor provoke each other to fight. He and Mike were members of such societies.

[2] Mass.

slip down wid a thrifle o' soot on our mugs, and walk off wid her to Kilnaheery, beyant the mountains, to an uncle's o' mine; an' afther that, let any man marry her who chooses to run the risk. Be the contints o' the book, Atty, if you don't dhrink I'll knock your head agin the wall, you gommoch!"

"Why, thin, by all that's beautiful, it's a good spree; an' we'll stick to you like pitch."

"Be the vartue o' my oath, you don't desarve to be in it, or you'd dhrink dacent. Why, here's another bottle, an' maybe there's more where that was. Well, let us finish what we have, or be the five crasses, I'll give up the whole business."

"Why, thin, here's success to us, anyway; an' high hangin' to them that ud desart you in your skame this blessed an' holy night that's in it!"

This was re-echoed by his friends, who pledged themselves by the most solemn oaths not to abandon him in the perpetration of the outrage which they had concerted. The other bottle was immediately opened, and while it lasted the details of the plan were explained at full length. This over, they entered the barn one by one, except Frank and Rody, who, as they were determined to steal another bottle from the father's stock, did not appear among the dancers until this was accomplished.

The re-appearance of these rollicking and reckless young fellows in the dance was hailed by all present; for their outrageous mirth was in character with the genius of the place. The dance went on with spirit; brag dancers were called upon to exhibit in hornpipes, and for this purpose a table was brought in from Frank's kitchen, on which they performed in succession, each dancer applauded by his respective party as the best in the barn.

In the meantime the night had advanced; the hour might be about half-past ten o'clock; all were in the zenith of enjoyment, when old Frank M'Kenna addressed them as follows:

"Neighbours, the dickens o' one o' me would like to break up the sport—an', in throth, harmless and dacent sport it is; but you all know that this is Christmas night, and that it's our duty to attind the Midnight Mass. Anybody that likes to hear it may go, for it's near time to be home an' prepare for it: but the sorra one o' me wants to take any of yees from your sport, if you prefer it; all I say is that I must lave yees; so God be wid yees till we meet agin!"

This short speech produced a general bustle in the barn; many of the elderly neighbours left it, and several of the young persons also. It was Christmas Eve, and the Midnight Mass had from time immemorial so strong a hold upon their prejudices and affections that the temptation must indeed have been great which would have prevented them from attending it. When old Frank went out, about one-third of those who were present left the dance along with him, and as the hour for mass was approaching, they lost no time in preparing for it.

The Midnight Mass is, no doubt, a phrase familiar to our Irish

readers ; but we doubt whether those in the sister kingdoms who may honour our book with a perusal would, without a more particular description, clearly understand it.

This ceremony was performed as a commemoration not only of the night, but of the hour in which Christ was born. To connect it either with edification or the abuse of religion would be invidious ; so we overlook that, and describe it as it existed within our own memory, remarking, by the way, that though now generally discontinued, it is in some parts of Ireland still observed, or has been till within a few years ago.

The parish in which the scene of this story is laid was large, consequently the attendance of the people was proportionably great. On Christmas day a Roman Catholic priest has, or is said to have, the privilege of saying *three* masses, though on every other day in the year he can celebrate but two. Each priest, then, said one at midnight, and two on the following day.

Accordingly, about twenty or thirty years ago, the performance of the Midnight Mass was looked upon as an ordinance highly important and interesting. The preparations for it were general and fervent ; so much so, that not a Roman Catholic family slept till they heard it. It is true it only occurred once a year ; but had any person who saw it *once* been called upon to describe it, he would say that religion could scarcely present a scene so wild and striking.

The night in question was very dark, for the moon had long disappeared, and as the inhabitants of the whole parish were to meet in one spot, it may be supposed that the difficulty was very great of traversing, in the darkness of midnight, the space between their respective residences and the place appointed by the priest for the celebration of mass. This difficulty they contrived to surmount. From about eleven at night till twelve or one o'clock the parish presented a scene singularly picturesque, and, to a person unacquainted with its causes, altogether mysterious. Over the surface of the surrounding country were scattered myriads of blazing torches, all converging to one point; whilst at a distance, in the central part of the parish, which lay in a valley, might be seen a broad focus of red light, quite stationary, with which one or more of the torches that moved across the fields mingled every moment. These torches were of bog-fir, dried and split for the occasion ; all persons were accordingly furnished with them, and by their blaze contrived to make way across the country with comparative ease. This mass having been especially associated with festivity and enjoyment, was always attended by such excessive numbers that the ceremony was in most parishes celebrated in the open air, if the weather were at all favourable. Altogether, as we have said, the appearance of the country at this dead hour of the night was wild and impressive. Being Christmas, every heart was up, and every pocket replenished with money, if it could at all be procured. This general elevation of spirits was nowhere more remarkable than in contemplating the thousands of both sexes, old and young, each furnished, as

before said, with a blazing flambeau of bog-fir, all streaming down the mountain sides, along the roads, or across the fields, and settling at last into one broad sheet of fire. Many a loud laugh might then be heard ringing the night echo into reverberation ; mirthful was the gabble in hard, guttural Irish ; and now and then a song from some one whose potations had been rather copious would rise on the night breeze, to which a chorus was subjoined by a dozen voices from the neighbouring groups.

On passing the shebeen and public houses, the din of mingled voices that issued from them was highly amusing, made up, as it was, of songs, loud talk, rioting and laughter, with an occasional sound of weeping from some one who had become penitent in his drink. In the larger public-houses (for in Ireland there usually are one or two of these in the immediate vicinity of each chapel) family parties were assembled, who set in to carouse both before and after mass. Those, however, who had any love affairs on hand generally selected the shebeen house, as being private, and less calculated to expose them to general observation. As a matter of course, these jovial orgies frequently produced such disastrous consequences both to human life and female reputation, that the intrigues between the sexes, the quarrels, and violent deaths resulting from them ultimately occasioned the discontinuance of a ceremony which was only productive of evil. To this day it is an opinion among the peasantry in many parts of Ireland that there is something unfortunate connected with all drinking bouts held upon Christmas Eve. Such a prejudice naturally arises from a recollection of the calamities which so frequently befell many individuals while Midnight Masses were in the habit of being celebrated.

None of Frank M'Kenna's family attended mass but himself and his wife. His children, having been bound by all the rules of courtesy to do the honours of the dance, could not absent themselves from it ; nor, indeed, were they disposed to do so. Frank, however, and his "good woman" carried their torches, and joined the crowds which flocked to this scene of fun and devotion.

When they had arrived at the cross-roads beside which the chapel was situated, the first object that presented itself so prominently as to attract observation was Darby More, dressed out in all his paraphernalia of blanket and horn, in addition to which he held in his hand an immense torch, formed into the figure of a cross. He was seated upon a stone, surrounded by a ring of old men and women, to whom he sang and sold a variety of Christmas carols, many of them rare curiosities in their way, inasmuch as they were his own composition. A little beyond them stood Mike Reillaghan and Peggy Gartland, towards both of whom he cast from time to time a glance of latent humour and triumph. He did not simply confine himself to singing his carols ; but, during the pauses of the melody, addressed the wondering and attentive crowd as follows :—

"Good Christians—this is the day—how-and-iver, it's night now, glory be to God—that the angel Lucifer appeared to Shud'orth, Meeshach, an' To-bed-we-go, in the village of Constantinople, near

Jerooslem. The heavens be praised for it, 'twas a blessed an' holy *night*, an' remains so from that *day* to this—Oxis Doxis Glorioxis, Amin! Well; the sarra one of him but appeared to thim at the hour o' midnight, but they were asleep at the time, you see, and didn't persave him. So wid that he pulled out a horn like mine—an', by the same token, it's lucky to wear horns about one from that day to this—an' he put it to his lips, an' *tuck* a good dacent—I mane, *gave* a good dacent blast that soon roused them. 'Are yees asleep?' says he, when they awoke: 'why then, bud-an'-age!' says he, 'isn't it a burnin' shame for able stout fellows like yees to be asleep at the hour o' midnight of all hours o' the night. Tare-an-age!' says he, 'get up wid yees, you dirty spalpeens! There's St. Pathrick in Jerooslem beyant; the Pope's signin' his mittimus to Ireland, to bless it in regard that neither corn, nor barley, nor phaties will grow an the land in quensequence of a set of varmint that ates it up; an' there's not a glass o' whisky to be had in Ireland for love or money,' says Lucifer. 'Get up wid yees,' says he, 'an' go in an' get his blessin'; sure there's not a Catholic in the counthry, barrin' Swaddlers, but's in the town by this,' says he: 'ay, an' many of the Protestants themselves, and the black-mouths, an' blue-bellies, are gone in to get a share of it. And now,' says he, 'bekase you wor so heavy-headed, I ordher it from this out, that the present night is to be obsarved in the Catholic Church all over the world, an' must be kep holy; an' no thrue Catholic ever will miss from this pariod an opportunity of bein' awake at midnight,' says he, 'glory be to God!' An' now, good Christians, you have an account o' the blessed carol I was singin' for yees. They're but hapuns apiece; an' anybody that has the grace to keep one o' these about them will never meet wid sudden deaths or accidents, sich as hangin', or drownin', or bein' taken suddenly wid a configuration inwardly. I wanst knew a holy man that had a dhrame—about a friend of his, it was——Will any of yees take one?—Thank you, a colleen: my blessin', the blessin' o' the pilgrim, be an you! God bless you, Mike Reillaghan; an' I'm proud that he put it into *your* heart to buy one, for the rasons you know. An' now that Father Hoolaghan's comin', any of yees that 'ill want them 'ill find me here agin when mass is over—Oxis Doxis Glorioxis, Amin!"

The priest at this time made his appearance, and those who had been assembled on the cross-roads joined the crowd at the chapel. No sooner was it bruited among them that their pastor had arrived than the noise, gabble, singing, and laughing were immediately hushed; the shebeen and public houses were left untenanted; and all flocked to the chapel-green, where mass was to be said, as the crowd was too large to be contained within the small chapel.

Mike Reillaghan and Peggy Gartland were among the last who sought the "green;" as lovers, they probably preferred walking apart to the inconvenience of being jostled by the multitude. As they sauntered on slowly after the rest, Mike felt himself touched on the shoulder, and on turning round found Darby More beside him.

"It's painful to my feelins," observed the mendicant, "to have to

say this blessed night that your father's son should act so shabby an' ondacent."

"Saints above! how, Darby?"

"Why, don't you know that only for me—for what I heard, an what I tould you—you'd not have the purty girl here at your elbow? Wasn't it, as I said, his intintion to come an' whip up the colleen to Kilnaheery while the family ud be at mass; sure only for this, I say, you bosthoon, an' that *I* made you bring her to mass, where ud the purty colleen be? why, half way to Kilnaheery, an' the girl disgraced for ever!"

"Thrue for you, Darby, I grant it: but what do you want me to do?"

"Oh, for that matther, nothin' at all, Mike; only I suppose that when your tailor made the clothes an you, he put no pockets to them?"

"Oh, I see where you are, Darby! Well, here's a crown for you; an' when Peggy an' I's made man an' wife you'll get another."

"Mike, achora, I see you *are* your father's son still; now listen to me: first, you needn't fear sudden death while you keep that blessed carol about you: next, get your friends together goin' home, for Frank might jist take the liberty, wid about a score of his 'boys,' to lift her from you even thin. Do the thing I say—don't thrust him; an', moreover, watch in her father's house to-night wid your friends. Thirdly, make it up wid Frank; there's an oath upon you both, *you persave*. Make it up wid him, if he axes you: don't have a broken oath upon you; for if you refuse, he'll get you put out o' connection,[1] an' that ud plase him to the backbone."

Mike felt the truth and shrewdness of this advice, and determined to follow it. Both young men had been members of an illegal society, and, in yielding to their passions so far as to assault each other, had been guilty of perjury. The following Christmas Day had been appointed by their parish delegates to take the quarrel into consideration; and the best means of escaping censure was certainly to express regret for what had occurred, and to terminate the hostility by an amicable adjustment of their disputes.

They had now reached the chapel-green, where the scene that presented itself was so striking and strange that we will give the reader an imperfect sketch of its appearance. He who stood at midnight upon a little mount which rose behind the chapel might see between five and six thousand torches, all blazing together, and forming a level mass of red, dusky light, burning against the dark horizon. These torches were so close to each other that their light seemed to blend, as if they had constituted one wide surface of flame; and nothing could be more preternatural looking than the striking and devotional countenances of those who were assembled at their midnight worship, when observed beneath this canopy of fire. The mass was performed under the open sky, upon a table covered with the

[1] Secret party.

sacrificial linen and other apparatus for the ceremony. The priest stood, robed in white, with two large torches on each side of his book, reciting the prayers in a low, rapid voice, his hands raised, whilst the congregation were hushed and bent forward in the reverential silence of devotion, their faces touched by the strong blaze of the torches into an expression of deep solemnity. The scenery about the place was wild and striking; and the stars, scattered thinly over the heavens, twinkled with a faint religious light, that blended well with the solemnity of this extraordinary worship, and rendered the rugged nature of the abrupt cliffs and precipices, together with the still outline of the stern mountains, sufficiently visible to add to the wildness and singularity of the ceremony. In fact, there was an unearthly character about it; and the spectre-like appearance of the white-robed priest, as he

"Muttered his prayer to the midnight air,"

would almost impress a man with the belief that it was a meeting of the dead, and that the priest was repeating, like the Grey Friar, his

"Mass of the days that were gone."

On the ceremony being concluded, the scene, however, was instantly changed: the lights were waved and scattered promiscuously among each other, giving an idea of confusion and hurry that was strongly contrasted with the death-like stillness that prevailed a few minutes before. The gabble and laugh were again heard loud and hearty, and the public and shebeen houses once more became crowded. Many of the young people made, on these occasions, what is called "a runaway;"[1] and other peccadilloes took place, for which the delinquents were either "read out from the altar," or sent probably to St. Patrick's Purgatory at Lough Derg to do penance. Those who did not choose to stop in the whisky houses now hurried home with all speed, to take some sleep before early mass, which was to be performed the next morning about daybreak. The same number of lights might therefore be seen streaming in different ways over the parish; the married men holding the torches, and leading their wives; bachelors escorting their sweethearts, and not unfrequently extinguishing their flambeaux, that the dependence of the females upon their care and protection might more lovingly call forth their gallantry.

When Mike Reillaghan considered with due attention the hint which Darby More had given him touching the necessity of collecting his friends as an escort for Peggy Gartland, he had strong reasons to admit its justness and propriety. After mass he spoke to about two dozen young fellows, who joined him, and under their protection Peggy now returned safely to her father's house.

Frank M'Kenna and his wife reached home about two o'clock; the dance was comparatively thin, though still kept up with considerable spirit. Having solemnized himself by the grace of so sacred a rite,

[1] Rustic elopement.

Frank thought proper to close the amusement, and recommend those whom he found in the barn to return to their respective dwellings.

"You have had a merry night, childher," said he; "but too much o' one thing's good for nothin'; so don't make a toil of a pleasure, but go all home dacently an' soberly, in the name o' God."

This advice was accordingly followed. The youngsters separated, and M'Kenna joined his family, "to have a sup along wid the man' Barny, in honour of what they had hard." It was upon this occasion he missed his son Frank, whose absence from the dance he had not noticed since his return until then.

"Musha, where's Frank?" he inquired: "I'll warrant him away wid his blackguards upon no good. God look down upon him! Many a black heart has that boy left us! If it's not the will o' heaven, I fear he'll come to no good. Barny, is he long gone from the dance?"

"Throth, Frank, wid the noise an' dancin', an' me bein' *dark*," replied Barny, shrewdly, "I can't take an me to say. For all you spake agin him, the sorra one of him but's a clane, dacent, spirited boy as there is widin a great ways of him. Here's all your healths! Faix, girls, you'll all sleep sound to night."

"Well," said Mrs. M'Kenna, "the knowledge of that Darby More is onknowable! Here's a carol I bought from him, an' if you wor but to hear the explanations he put to it! Why Father Hoolaghan could hardly outdo him!"

"Divil a man in the five parishes can dance 'Jig Polthogue' wid him, for all that," said Barny. "Many a time Granua an' I played it for him, an' you'd know the tune upon his feet. He undherstands a power o' ranns an' prayers, an' has charms an' holy herbs for all kinds of ailments, no doubt."

"These men, you see," observed Mrs. M'Kenna, in the true spirit of credulity and superstition, "may do many things that the likes of us oughtn't to do, by rason of their great fastin' an' prayin'."

"Thrue for you, Alley," replied her husband; "but come, let us have a sup more in comfort: the sleep's gone *a shraugran* an us this night, anyway, so, Barny, give us a song, an' afther that we'll have a taste o' prayers, to close the night."

"But you don't think of the long journey I've before me," replied Barny: "how-and-iver, if you promise to send some one home wid me, we'll have the song. I wouldn't care, but the night bein' dark, you see, I'll want somebody to guide me."

"Faith, an' it's but rasonable, Barny, an' you must get Rody home wid you. I suppose he's asleep in his bed by this, but we'll rouse him!"

Barny replied by a loud triumphant laugh, for this was one of his standing jests.

"Well, Frank," said he, "I never thought you war so soft, an' me can pick my steps the same at night as in daylight. Sure that's the way I *done* them to-night, when one o' Granua's string's broke. 'Sweets o' rosin,' says I; 'a candle—bring me a candle immedintly.' An' down came Rody in all haste wid a candle. 'Six eggs to you, Rody,' says myself, 'an' half-a-dozen o' them ratten! but you're a

bright boy, to bring a lit candle to a blind man!' and then he stood a *bouloare* to the whole house—ha, ha, ha!"

Barny, who was not the man to rise first from the whisky, commenced the relation of his choicest anecdotes; old Frank and the family, being now in a truly genial mood, entered into the spirit of his jests, so that between chat, songs, and whisky, the hour had now advanced to four o'clock. The fiddler was commencing another song, when the door opened, and Frank presented himself, nearly, but not altogether, in a state of intoxication; his face was besmeared with blood; and his whole appearance that of a man under the influence of strong passion, such as would seem to be produced by disappointment and defeat.

"What!" said the father; "is it snowin', Frank? Your clothes are covered wid snow!"

"Lord, guard us!" exclaimed the mother, "is that blood upon your face, Frank?"

"It *is* snowin', and it *is* blood that's upon my face," answered Frank, moodily. "Do you want to know more news?"

"Why, ay indeed," replied his mother, "we want to hear how you came to be cut!"

"You won't hear it, then," he replied.

The mother was silent, for she knew the terrible fits of passion to which he was subject.

The father groaned deeply, and exclaimed, "Frank, Frank, God help you, an' show you the sins you're committin', an' the heart-scaldin' you're givin' both your mother an' me! What fresh skrimmage had you that you're in that state?"

"Spare yourself the throuble of inquirin'," he replied: "all I can say," he continued, starting up into sudden fury—"all I can say, an' I say it—I swear it—where's the prayer-book?" and he ran franticly to a shelf beside the dresser on which the prayer-book lay,—"ay! by him that made me I'll sware it—by this sacred book, while I live, Mike Reillaghan, the husband of Peggy Gartland you'll never be, if I should swing for it! Now you all seen I kissed the book!" As he spoke, he tossed it back upon the shelf.

The mirth that had prevailed in the family was immediately hushed, and a dead silence ensued; Frank sat down, but instantly rose again, and flung the chair from him with such violence that it was crashed to pieces; he muttered oaths and curses, ground his teeth, and betrayed all the symptoms of jealousy, hatred, and disappointment.

"Frank, abouchal," said Barny, commencing to address him in a conciliatory tone—"Frank, man alive ——"

"Hould your tongue, I say, you blind vagabone, or, by the night above us, I'll break your fiddle over your skull, if you dare to say another word. What I swore I'll do, an' let no one crass me."

He was a powerful young man, and such was his temper, and so well was it understood, that not one of the family durst venture a word of remonstrance.

The father rose, went to the door, and returned. "Barny," said he,

"you must contint yourself where you are for this night. It's snowin' heavily, so you had betther sleep wid Rody ; I see a light in tne barn ; I suppose he's after bringin' in his bed an' makin' it "

"I'll do anything," replied the poor fiddler, now apprehensive of violence from the outrageous temper of young Frank.

"Well, thin," added the good man, "let us all go to bed, in the name of God. Micaul, bring Barny to the barn, and see that he's comfortable."

This was complied with, and the family quietly and timidly retired to rest, leaving the violent young man storming and digesting his passion behind them.

Mass on Christmas morning was then, as now, performed at daybreak, and again the Roman Catholic inhabitants of the parish were up betimes to attend it. Frank M'Kenna's family were assembled, notwithstanding their short sleep, at an early breakfast ; but their meal, in consequence of the unpleasant sensation produced by the outrage of their son, was less cheerful than it would otherwise have been. Perhaps, too, the gloom which hung over them was increased by the snow that had fallen the night before, and by the wintry character of the day, which was such as to mar much of their expected enjoyment. There was no allusion made to their son's violence overnight ; neither did he himself appear to be in any degree affected by it. When breakfast was over they prepared to attend mass, and, what was unusual, young Frank was the first to set out for the chapel.

"Maybe," said the father, after he was gone—"maybe that fool of a boy is sarry for his behaviour. It's many a day since I knew him to go to mass of his own accord. It's a good sign, anyway."

"Musha," inquired his mother, "what could happen atween him an' that civil boy, Mike Reillaghan ?"

"The sorra one o' me knows," replied his father ; "an' now that I think of it, sure enough there was none o' them at the dance last night, although I sent himself down for them. Micaul," he added, addressing the other son, "will you put an your big coat, slip down to Reillaghan's, an' bring me word what came atween them at all ; an' tell Owen himself the thruth, that this boy's brakin' our hearts by his coorses."

Micaul, who, although he knew the cause of the enmity between these rivals, was ignorant of that which occasioned his brother's rash oath, also felt anxious to ascertain the circumstances of the last quarrel. For this purpose, as well as in obedience to his father's wishes, he proceeded to Reillaghan's, and arrived just as Darby More and young Mike had set out for mass.

"What," said the mendicant, "can be bringin' Micaul down, I wondher ? Somethin' about that slip o' grace, his brother."

"I suppose so," said Mike ; "an' I wish the same slip was as dacent an' inoffensive as he is. I don't know a boy livin' I'd go farther for nor the same Micaul. He's a credit to the family as much as the other's a stain upon them."

"Well, anyhow, you war Frank's match, an' more, last night. How

bitther he was bint on bringin' Peggy aff, when he an' his set waited till they seen the country clear, an' thought the family asleep! Had you man for man, Mike?"

"Ay, about that; an' we set so snug in Peggy's that you'd hear a pin fallin'. A hard tug, too, there was in the beginnin'; but whin they found that we had a strong back, they made away, an' we gave them purshute from about the house."

"You may thank me, anyhow, for havin' her to the good; but I knew by my dhrame, wid the help o' God, that there was somethin' to happen; by the same a token, that your mother's an the high horse about that dhrame. I'm to tell it to her, wid the sinse of it, in the evenin', when the day's past, an' all of us in comfort."

"What was it, Darby? sure you may let me hear it."

"Maybe I will in the evenin'. It was about you an' Peggy, the darlin'. But how will you manage in regard of brakin' the oath, and sthrikin' a brother?"

"Why, that I couldn't get over it, whin *he* sthruck me first: sure he's worse off. I'll lave it to the dilegates, an' whatever judgment they give out, I'll take wid it."

"Well," observed Darby, sarcastically, "it made him do one good turn, anyway."

"What was that, Darby? for good turns are but scarce wid him."

"Why, it made him hear mass to-day," replied the mendicant; "an' that's what he hadn't the grace to do this many a year. It's away in the mountains wid his gun he'd be, thracin', an' a fine day it is for it—only this business prevints him. Now, Mike," observed Darby, "as we're comin' out upon the *boreen*, I'll fall back, an' do you go an: I have part of my *padareens* to say, before I get to the chapel, wid a blessin'; an' we had as good not be seen together."

The mendicant, as he spoke, pulled out a long pair of beads, on which he commenced his prayers, occasionally accosting an acquaintance with a *gho mhany Deah ghud*,[1] and sometimes taking a part in the conversation for a minute or two, after which he resumed the prayers as before.

The day was now brightening up, although the earlier part of the morning had threatened severe weather. Multitudes were flocking to the chapel; the men well secured in frieze great-coats, in addition to which many of them had their legs bound with straw ropes, and others with leggings made of old hats cut up for the purpose. The women were secured with cloaks, the hoods of which were tied with kerchiefs of some showy colour over their bonnets or their caps, which, together with their elbows projecting behind, for the purpose of preventing their dress from being dabbled in the snow, gave them a marked and most picturesque appearance.

Reillaghan and M'Kenna both reached the chapel a considerable time before the arrival of the priest; and as a kind of Whiteboy committee was to sit for the purpose of investigating their conduct in

[1] God save you!

holding out so dangerous an example as they did, by striking each other, contrary to their oaths as brothers under the same system, they accordingly were occupied each in collecting his friends, and conciliating those whom they supposed to be hostile to them on the opposite party. It had been previously arranged that this committee should hold a court of inquiry, and that, provided they could not agree, the matter was to be referred to two hedge schoolmasters, who should act as umpires; but if it happened that the latter could not decide it, there was no other tribunal appointed to which a final appeal could be made.

According to these regulations a court was opened in a shebeen house that stood somewhat distant from the road. Twelve young fellows seated themselves on each side of a deal table, with one of the umpires at each end of it, and a bottle of whisky in the middle. In a higher sphere of life it is usual to refer such questionable conduct as occurs in duelling to the arbitration of those who are known to be qualified by experience in the duello. On this occasion the practice was not departed from, those who had been thus selected as the committee being the most notoriously pugnacious "boys" in the whole parish.

"Now, boys," said one of the schoolmasters, "let us proceed to operations wid proper spirit," and he filled a glass of whisky as he spoke. "Here's all your healths, and next, pace and unanimity to us! Call in the culprits."

Both were accordingly admitted, and the first speaker resumed: "Now, in the second place, I'll read yees that part o' the oath which binds us all under the obligation of not strikin' one another—hem! hem!—'No brother is to strike another, knowing him to be such; he's to strike him—hem!—neither in fair nor market, at home nor abroad, neither in public nor in private, neither on Sunday nor week-day, present or absent, nor ——"

"I condimn that," observed the other master. "I condimn it, as bein' too latitudinarian in principle, an' containing a paradogma; besides, it's bad grammar."

"You're rather airly in the market wid your bad grammar," replied the other. "I'll grant you the paradogma, but I'll stand up for the grammar of it while I'm able to stand up for anything."

"Faith, an' if you rise to stand up for that," replied his friend, "and doesn't choose to sit down till you prove it to be good grammar, you'll be a standin' joke all your life."

"I bleeve it's purty conspicuous in the parish that I have often, in our disputations about grammar, left you widout a leg to stand upon at all," replied the other.

This sally was well received, but his opponent was determined to push home the argument at once.

"I would be glad to know," he inquired, "by what beautiful invintion a man could contrive to strike another in his *absence?* Have you good grammar for *that?*"

"And did you never hear of detraction?" replied his opponent;

"that is, a man who's in the habit of spaking falsehoods of his friends whin their backs are turned—that is to say, whin they are absent. Now, sure, if a man's absent whin his back's turned, mayn't any man whose back's turned be said to be absent—ergo, to strike a man behind his back is to strike him whin he's absent. Does that confound you? where's your logic and grammar to meet proper ratiocination like what I'm displaying?"

"Faith," replied the other, "you may have had logic and grammar, but I'll take my oath it was in your younger years, for both have been *absent* ever since I knew you: they turned their *backs* upon you, man alive: for they didn't like, you see, to be keepin' bad company—ha, ha, ha?"

"Why, you poor cratur," said his antagonist, "if I choose to let myself out, I'd make a hare of you in no time entirely."

"And an ass of yourself," retorted the other; "but you may save yourself the throuble in regard of the last, for your frinds know you to be an ass ever since they remimber you. You have them here, man alive—the auricles," and he pointed to his ears.

"Hut! get out wid you, you poor Jamaica-headed castigator, you; sure you never had more nor a thimbleful o' sinse on any subject."

"Faith, an' the thimble that measured yours was a tailor's, one widout a bottom in it, an' good measure you got, you miserable flagellator! what are you but a *nux vomica?* A fit o' the ague's a thrifle compared to your asinity."

The "boys" were delighted at this encounter, and, utterly forgetful of the pacific occasion on which they had assembled, began to pit them against each other with great glee.

"That's a hard hit, Misther Costigan; but you won't let it pass, anyhow."

"The ague an' you are ould acquaintances," retorted Costigan; "whenever a scrimmage takes place, you're sure to resave a visit from it."

"Why, I'm not such a haro as yourself," replied his rival, "nor such a great hand at batin' the *absent*—ha, ha, ha!"

"Bravo, Misther Connell—that's a leveller; come, Misther Costigan, bedad, if you don't answer that you're bate."

"By this and by that, man alive, if you don't mend your manners, maybe I'd make it betther for you to be absent also. You'll only put me to the throuble of mendin' them for you."

"Mend my manners!" exclaimed his opponent, with a bitter sneer—"*you* to mend them! Out wid your budget and your hammer, then; you're the very tinker of good manners—bekase for one dacency you'd mend, you'd spoil twenty."

"I'm able to hammer you, at all events, or, for that matther, any one of your illiterate gineration. Sure it's well known that you can't tache Voshter (Voster) widout the Kay."

"Hould there, if you plase," exclaimed one of his opponent's relations "don't lug in *his family; that's* known to be somewhat afore

your own, I bleeve. There's no *informers* among them, Misther Costigan : keep at home, masther, if you plase."

"At *home!* that's more than some o' your own *cleaveens*[1] have been able to do," rejoined Costigan, alluding to one of the young fellow's acquaintances who had been transported.

"Do you mane to put an affront upon me?" said the other.

"Since the *barrhad*[2] fits you, wear it," replied Costigan.

"Very right, masther, make him a present of it," exclaimed one of Costigan's distant relations; "he desarves that, an' more if he'd get it."

"Do I?" said the other; "an' what have *you* to say on the head of it?"

"Why, not much," answered Bartle, "only that you ought to've left it betune them; an' that *I'll* back Misther Costigan agin any rascal that ud say there was ever a drop of his blood in an informer's veins."

"*I* say it, for one," replied the other.

"And I, for another," said Connell; "an', what's worse, I'll hould a wager that, if he was searched this minute, you'd find a Kay to Gough in his pocket, although he throws Vosther in my teeth: the dunce never goes widout one. Sure he's not able to set a dacent copy, or headline, or to make a dacent hook, nor a hanger, nor a down-stroke, and was a poor scholar, too!"

"I'll give you a down-stroke in the manetime, you ignoramus," said the pedagogue, throwing himself to the end of the table at which his enemy sat, and laying him along the floor by a single blow.

He was instantly attacked by the friend of the prostrate academician, who was in his turn attacked by the friend of Costigan. The adherents of the respective teachers were immediately rushing to a general engagement, when the door opened, and Darby More made his appearance.

"Asy!—stop wid yees!—hould back, ye disgraceful villains!" exclaimed the mendicant, in a thundering voice; "be asy, I say. Saints in glory, is this the way you're settling the dispute between the two dacent young men, that's sorry, both o' them, I'll go bail, for what they done. Sit down, every one of yees, or, by the blessed ordhers I wear about me, I'll report yees to Father Hoolaghan, an' have yees read out from the althar, or sint to Lough Derg! Sit down I say!"

As he spoke he extended his huge cant between the hostile parties, and thrust them one by one to their seats with such muscular energy that he had them sitting before another blow could be given.

"Saints in glory!" he exclaimed again, "isn't this blessed doins an the sacred day that's in it! that a poor, helpless ould man like me can't come to get somethin' to take away this misfortunit touch o' configuration that I'm afflicted wid in cowld weather—that I can't take a little sup of the only thing that cures me, widout your ructions and battles! You came here to make pace between two dacent men's

[1] Distant relations. [2] Cap.

childher, and you're as bad, if not worse, yourselves!—Oh, wurrah dheelish, what's this! I'm in downright agony! Oh, murdher sheery! Has none o' yees a hand to thry if there's e'er a dhrop of relief in that bottle? or am I to die all out, in the face o' the world, for want of a sup o' something to warm me?"

"Darby, thry the horn," said M'Kenna.

"Here, Darby," said one of them, "dhrink this off, an' my life for yours, it'll warm you to the marrow!"

"Och, musha, but I wanted it badly," replied Darby, swallowing it at once; "it's the only thing does me good when I'm this way. *Deah Grasthias!*[1] Oxis Doxis Glorioxis! Amin."

"I think," said M'Kenna, "that what's in the horn's far afore it."

"Oh, thin, you thoughtless crathur, if you knew somethin' I hard about you a while ago, you'd think otherwise. But, indeed, it's thrue for you; I'm sure I'd be sarry to compare what's in *it* to anything o' the kind I tuck. *Deah Grasthias!* Throth, I'm asier now a great dale nor I was."

"Will you take another sup, Darby?" inquired the young fellow in whose hands the bottle was now nearly empty; "there's jist about another glass."

"Indeed an' I will, *a villish*;[2] an' sure you'll have my blessin' for it, an' barrin' the priest's own, you couldn't have a more luckier one, blessed be God for it—sure *that's* well known. In throth, they never came to ill that had it, an' never did good that got my curse! Houp! do you hear how that rises the wind off my stomach? Houp!—*Deah Grasthias* for that!"

"How did you larn all the prayers an' charms you have, Darby?" inquired the bottle-holder.

"It would take me too long to tell you that, *a villish!* But, childher, now that you're all together, make it up wid one another. Aren't you all frinds an' brothers, *sworn* brothers, an' why would you be fightin' among other? Misther Costigan, give me your hand; sure I heard a thrifle o' what you were sayin' while I was suckin' my dudeen at the fire widout. Come here, Misther Connell. Now, before the saints in glory, I lay my bitther curse an him that refuses to shake hands wid his inimy. There now—I'm proud to see it. Mike, avourneen, come here—Frank M'Kenna, *gutsho*,[3] walk over here; my bitther heart's curse upon both of yees if you don't make up all quarrels this minnit! Are you willin', Mike Reillaghan?"

"I have no objection in life," replied Mike, "if he'll say that Peggy Gartland won't be put to any more throuble through his manes."

"There's my hand, Mike," said Frank, "that I forget an' forgive all that's past; an' in regard o' Peggy Gartland, why, as she's so dark agin me, I lave her to you for good."[4]

"Well! see what it is to have the good intintions!—to be makin' pace an' friendship atween inimies! That's all I think about, an' nothin' gives me greater pleas—— Saints o' glory!—what's this!—oh,

[1] God be praised.
[2] My sweet—an epithet of endearment.
[3] Come hither.
[4] In future—altogether.

wurra !—that thief of a—wurrah dheelish !—that touch o' configuration's comin' back agin !—oh, thin, but it's hard to get it undher !—oh ! ——"

"I'm sarry for it, Darby," replied he who held the now empty bottle, "for the whisky's out."

"Throth, an' I'm sarry myself, for nothin' else does me good ; an' Father Hoolaghan says nothin' *can* keep it down barrin' the sup o' whisky. It's best burnt, wid a little bit o' butther an it ; but I can't get that always, it overtakes me so suddenly. Glory be to God !"

"Well," said M'Kenna, "as Mike an' myself was the manes of bringin' us together, why, if he joins me, we'll have another bottle."

"Throth, an' it's fair an' dacent, an' he must do it ; by the same a token, that I'll not lave the house till it's dhrunk, for there's no thrustin' yees together, you're so hot-headed an' ready to rise the hand," said Darby.

M'Kenna and Mike, having been reconciled, appeared in a short time warmer friends than ever. While the last bottle went round those who had before been on the point of engaging in personal conflict now laughed at their own foibles, and expressed the kindness and good-will which they felt for each other at heart.

"Now," said the mendicant, "go all of you to mass, an' as soon as you can to confission, for it's not good to have the broken oath an' the sin of it over one. Confiss it, an' have your consciences light : sure it's a happiness that you *can* have the guilt taken off o' yees, childher."

"Thrue for you, Darby," they replied ; "an' we'll be thinkin' of your advice."

"Ay, do, childher ; an' there's Father Hoolaghan comin' down the road, so, in the name o' goodness, we haven't a minnit to lose."

They all left the shebeen house as he spoke except Frank and himself, who remained until they had gone out of hearing.

"Darby," said he, "I want you to come up to our house in the mornin', an' bring along wid you the things that you stamp the crass upon the skin wid : I'm goin' to get the crucifix put upon me. But on the paril o' your life don't brathe a word of it to mortual."

"God enable you, avick ! it's a good intintion. I will indeed be up wid you—airly, too, wid a blessin'. It is that, indeed—a good intintion, sure enough."

The parish chapel was about one hundred perches from the shebeen house in which the "boys" had assembled ; the latter were proceeding there in a body when Frank overtook them.

"Mike," said he aside to Reillaghan, "we'll have time enough—walk back a bit. I'll tell you what I'm thinkin'; you never seen in your life a finer day for thracin'; what ud you say if we give the boys the slip, never heed mass, an' set off to the mountains ?"

"Won't we have time enough afther mass ?" said Reillaghan.

"Why, man, sure you *dia* hear mass *once* to-day. Weren't you at it last night? No, indeed, we won't be time enough afther it ; for this bein' Chris'mas Day we must be home at dinner time ; you know it's not lucky to be from the family upon set days. Hang-an-ounty, come;

we'll have fine sport! I have cock-sticks[1] enough. The best part of the day'll be gone if we wait for mass. Come, an' let us start."

"Well, well," replied Reillaghan, "the sarra hair I care; so let us go. I'd like myself to have a rap at the hares in the Black Hills, sure enough; but as it ud be remarkable for us to be seen lavin' mass, why let us crass the field here, an' get out upon the road above the bridge."

To this his companion assented, and they both proceeded at a brisk pace, each apparently anxious for the sport, and resolved to exhibit such a frank cordiality of manner as might convince the other that all their past enmity was forgotten and forgiven.

Their direct path to the mountains lay by M'Kenna's house, where it was necessary they should call, in order to furnish themselves with cock-sticks and to bring dogs, which young Frank kept for the purpose. The inmates of the family were at mass, with the exception of Frank's mother, and Rody, the servant man, whom they found sitting on his own bed in the barn, engaged at cards, the right hand against the left.

"Well, Rody," said Frank, "who's winnin'?"

"The left entirely," replied his companion: "the divil a game at all the right's gettin', whatever's the rason of it, an' I'm always turnin' up black. I hope none of my frinds or acquaintances will die soon."

"Throw them aside—quit of them," said Frank, "give them to me, I'll put them past; an' do you bring us out the gun. I've the powdher an' shot here; we may as well bring her, an' have a slap at them. One o' the officers in the barracks of —— keeps me in powdher an' shot, besides givin' me an odd crown, an' I keep him in game."

"Why, thin, boys," observed Rody, "what's the manin' o' this?—two o' the biggest inimies in Europe last night an' this mornin', an' now as great as two thieves! How does that come?"

"Very asy, Rody," replied Reillaghan; "we made up the quarrel, shuck hands, an's good frinds as ever."

"Bedad, that bates cock-fightin'," said Rody, as he went to bring in the gun.

In the meantime, Frank, with the cards in his hand, went to the eave of the barn, thrust them up under the thatch, and took out of the same nook a flask of whisky.

"We'll want this," said he, putting it to his lips, and gulping down a portion. "Come, Mike, be tastin': an' aftherwards put this in your pocket."

Mike followed his example, and was corking the flask when Rody returned with the gun.

"She's charged," said Frank; "but we'd betther put in fresh primin', for fraid of her hangin' fire."

He then primed the gun, and handed it to Reillaghan. "Do *you* keep the gun, Mike," he added, "an' I'll keep the cock-sticks. Rody,

[1] A cock-stick was so called from being used on Cock-Monday to throw at a cock tied to a stake. It was about the length of a common stick, but much heavier and thicker at one end.

I'll bet you a shillin' I kill more wid the cock-stick nor he will wid the gun. Will you take me up?"

"I know a safer thrick," replied Rody. "You're a dead aim wid the cock-stick, sure enough, an' a deader aim wid the gun, too: catch me at it."

"You show some sinse, for a wondher," observed Frank, as he and his companion left the barn, and turned towards the mountain, which rose frowning behind the house.

Rody stood looking after them until they wound up slowly out of sight among the hills; he then shook his head two or three times, and exclaimed, "By dad, there's somethin' in this, if one could make out what it is. I know Frank."

Christmas Day passed among the peasantry as it usually passes in Ireland. Friends met before dinner in their own, in their neighbours', in shebeen or in public houses, where they drank, sang, or fought, according to their natural dispositions, or the quantity of liquor they had taken. The festivity of the day might be known by the unusual reek of smoke that danced from each chimney, by the number of persons who crowded the roads, by their brand-new dresses—for if a young man or country girl can afford a dress at all, they provide it for Christmas—and by the striking appearance of those who, having drunk a little too much, were staggering home in the purest happiness, singing, stopping their friends, shaking hands with them, or kissing them, without any regard to sex. Many a time might be seen two Irishmen, who had got drunk together, leaving a fair or market, their arms about each other's necks, from whence they only removed them to kiss and hug one another the more lovingly. Notwithstanding this, there is nothing more probable than that these identical two will enjoy the luxury of a mutual battle, by way of episode, and again proceed on their way, kissing and hugging as if nothing had happened to interrupt their friendship. All the usual effects of jollity and violence, fun and fighting, love and liquor, were, of course, to be seen, felt, heard, and understood on this day, in a manner much more remarkable than on common occasions; for it may be observed that the national festivals of the Irish bring out their strongest points of character with peculiar distinctness.

The family of Frank M'Kenna were sitting down to their Christmas dinner; the good man had besought a blessing upon the comfortable and abundant fare of which they were about to partake, and nothing was amiss, save the absence of their younger son.

"Musha, where on earth can this boy be stayin'?" said the father. "I'm sure this, above all days in the year, is one he oughtn't to be from home an."

The mother was about to inform him of the son's having gone to the mountains, when the latter returned, breathless, pale, and horror-struck.

Rody eyed him keenly, and laid down the bit he was conveying to his mouth.

"Heavens above us!" exclaimed his mother, "what ails you?"

He only replied by dashing his hat on the ground, and exclaiming, "Up wid yees!—up wid yees!—quit your dinners! Oh, Rody! what'll be done? Go down to Owen Reillaghan's—go 'way—go down—an' tell thim—oh, *vick-na-hoie!* but this was the unfortunate day to us all! Mike Reillaghan is shot wid my gun; she went off in his hand goin' over a snow wreath, an' he's lyin' dead in the mountains!"

The screams and the wailings which immediately rose in the family were dreadful. Mrs. M'Kenna almost fainted; and the father, after many struggles to maintain his firmness, burst into the bitter tears of disconsolation and affliction. Rody was calmer, but turned his eyes from one to another with a look of deep compassion, and again eyed Frank keenly and suspiciously.

Frank's eye caught his, and the glance which had surveyed him with such scrutiny did not escape his observation. "Rody," said he, "do you go an' brake it to the Reillaghans: you're the best to do it; for, when we were settin' out, you saw that *he* carried the gun, an' not *me*."

"Thrue for you," said Rody; "I saw that, Frank, and can swear to it; but that's all I *did* see. I know nothing of what happened in the mountains."

"*Damnho seery orth!*[1] What do you mane, you villain?" exclaimed Frank, seizing the tongs, and attempting to strike him: "do you dar to suspect that I had any hand in it?"

"*Wurrah dheelish,*[2] Frank," screamed the sisters, "are you goin' to murdher Rody?"

"*Murdher,*" he shouted, in a paroxysm of fury, "why, the curse o' God upon you all, what puts murdher into your heads? Is it my own family that's the first to charge me wid it?"

"Why, there's no one chargin' you wid it," replied Rody, "not one; whatever makes you take it to yourself?"

"An' what did you look at me for, thin, the way you did? What did you look at me for, I say?"

"Is it any wondher," replied the servant, coolly, "when you had sich a dreadful story to tell?"

"Go off," replied Frank, now hoarse with passion; "go off, an' tell the Reillaghans what happened; but, by all the books that ever was opened or shut, if you breathe a word about murdh—about—if you do, you villain, I'll be the death o' you!"

When Rody was gone on this melancholy errand, old M'Kenna first put the tongs, and everything he feared might be used as a weapon by his frantic son, out of his reach; he then took down the book on which he had the night before sworn so rash and mysterious an oath, and desired the son to look upon it.

"Frank," said he, solemnly, "you swore on that blessed book last night that Mike Reillaghan never would be the husband of Peggy Gartland—*he's a corpse to-day!* Yes," he continued, "the good, the

[1] Eternal perdition on you! [2] Sweet Virgin.

honest, the industhrious boy is"—his sobs became so loud and thick that he appeared almost suffocated. "Oh," said he, "may God pity *us!* As I hope to meet my blessed Saviour, who was born on this day, I would rather you war the corpse, an' not Mike Reillaghan!"

"I don't doubt that," said the son, fiercely; "you never showed me much *grah*,[1] sure enough."

"Did you ever desarve it?" replied the father. "Heaven above me knows it was too much kindness was showed you. When you ought to have been well corrected, you got your will an your way, an' now see the upshot."

"Well," said the son, "it's the last day ever I'll stay in the family; thrate me as bad as you plase. I'll take the king's bounty, an' list, if I live to see to-morrow."

"Oh, thin, in the name o' goodness, do so," said the father; "an' so far from previntin' you, we'll bless you when you're gone, for goin'."

"Arrah, Frank, aroon," said Mrs. M'Kenna, who was now recovered, "maybe, afther all, it was only an accident: sure, we often hard of sich things. Don't you remimber Squire Elliott's son, that shot himself by accident, out fowlin'? Frank, can you clear yourself afore us?"

"Oh, Alley! Alley!" exclaimed the father, wiping away his tears, "don't you remimber his *oath*, last night?"

"What oath?" inquired the son, with an air of surprise; "what oath last night? I know I was dhrunk last night, but I remimber nothing about an oath."

"Do you deny it, you hardened boy?"

"I *do* deny it; an' I'm not a hardened boy. What do you all mane? do yees want to dhrive me mad? I know nothin' about any oath last night," replied the son in a loud voice.

The grief of the mother and daughters was loud during the pauses of the conversation. Micaul, the eldest son, sat beside his father in tears.

"Frank," said he, "many an advice I gave you between ourselves, and you know how you tuck them. When you'd stale the oats, an' the meal, and the phaties, an' hay, at night, to have money for your cards an' dhrinkin', I kept it back, an' said nothin' about it. I wish I hadn't done so, for it wasn't for your good; but it was my desire to have as much pace and quietness as possible."

"Frank," said the father, eyeing him solemnly, "it's *possible* that you *do* forget the oath you made last night, for you war in liquor: I would give the wide world that it was thrue. Can you now, in the presence of God, clear yourself of havin' act or part in the death of Mike Reillaghan?"

"What ud ail me," said the son, "if I liked?"

"Will you do it now for our satisfaction, an' take a load of misery off of our hearts? It's the laste you may do, if you *can* do it. In the presence of the great God, will you clear yourself now?"

[1] Affection.

"I suppose," said the son, "I'll have to clear myself to-morrow, an' there's no use in my doin' it more than wanst. When the time comes I'll do it."

The father put his hands on his eyes, and groaned aloud: so deep was his affliction that the tears trickled through his fingers during this fresh burst of sorrow. The son's refusal to satisfy them renewed the grief of all, as well as of the father: it rose again, louder than before, whilst young Frank sat opposite the door, silent and sullen.

It was now dark, but the night was calm and agreeable. M'Kenna's family felt the keen affliction which we have endeavoured to describe; the dinner was put hastily aside, and the festive spirit peculiar to this night became changed into one of gloom and sorrow. In this state they sat, when the voice of grief was heard loud in the distance; the strong cry of men, broken and abrupt, mingled with the shrieking wail of female lamentation.

The M'Kennas started, and Frank's countenance assumed an expression which it would be difficult to describe. There was, joined to his extreme paleness, a restless, apprehensive, and determined look; each trait apparently struggling for the ascendency in his character, and attempting to stamp his face with its own expression.

"Do you hear *that?*" said his father. "Oh, musha, Father of Heaven, look down an' support that family this night! Frank, if you take my advice, you'll lave their sight; for surely, if they brained you on the spot, who could blame them?"

"Why ought I lave their sight?" replied Frank. "I tell you all that I had no hand in his death. The gun went off by accident as he was crassin' a wreath o' snow. I was afore him, and when I heard the report, an' turned round, there he lay, shot an' bleedin'. I thought it mightn't signify, but on lookin' at him closely I found him quite dead. I then ran home, never touchin' the gun at all, till his family an' the neighbours ud see him. Surely, it's no wondher I'd be distracted in my mind; but that's no rason you should all open upon me, as if *I* had murdhered the boy!"

"Well," said the father, "I'm glad to hear you say even that much. I hope it may be betther wid you than we all think; an' oh! grant it, sweet Mother o' Heaven, this day! Now carry yourself quietly afore the people. If they abuse you, don't fly into a passion, but make allowance for their grief and misery."

In the meantime the tumult was deepening as it approached M'Kenna's house. The report had almost instantly spread through the village in which Reillaghan lived; and the loud cries of his father and brothers, who, in the wildness of their despair, continually called upon his name, had been heard at the houses which lay scattered over the neighbourhood. Their inmates, on listening to such unusual sounds, sought the direction from which they proceeded, for it was quite evident that some terrible calamity had befallen the Reillaghans, in consequence of the son's name being borne on the blasts of night with such loud and overwhelming tones of grief and anguish. The assembly, on reaching M'Kenna's, might, therefore, be numbered at

thirty, including the females of Reillaghan's immediate family, who had been strung by the energy of despair to a capability of bearing any fatigue, or, rather, to an utter insensibility of all bodily suffering.

We must leave the scene which ensued to the reader's imagination, merely observing that as neither the oath which young Frank had taken the preceding night, nor, indeed, the peculiar bitterness of his enmity towards the deceased, was known by the Reillaghans, they did not, therefore, discredit the account of his death which they had heard.

Their grief was exclamatory and full of horror; consisting of prolonged shrieks on the part of the women, and frantic howlings on that of the men. The only words they uttered were his name, with epithets and ejaculations. "*Oh, a Vichaul dheelish—a Vichaul dheelish—a bouchal bane machree—wuill thu marra—wuill thu marra?*" "Oh, Michael, the beloved—Michael, the beloved—fair boy of our heart—are you dead?—are you dead?"

From M'Kenna's the crowd, at the head of which was Darby More, proceeded towards the mountains, many of them bearing torches, such as had been used on their way to the midnight mass. The moon had disappeared, the darkness was deepening, and the sky was overhung with black, heavy clouds, that gave a stormy character to scenery in itself remarkably wild and gloomy.

Young M'Kenna and the pilgrim led them to the dreary waste in which the corpse lay. It was certainly an awful spectacle to behold these unhappy people toiling up the mountain solitude at such an hour, their convulsed faces thrown into striking relief by the light of the torches, and their cries rising in wild, irregular cadences upon the blast which swept over them with a dismal howl, in perfect character with their affliction and the circumstances which produced it.

On arriving within view of the corpse there was a slight pause; for, notwithstanding the dreadful paroxysms of their grief, there was something still more startling and terrible in contemplating the body thus stretched out in the stillness of death on the lonely mountain. The impression it produced was peculiarly solemn: the grief was hushed for a moment, but only for a moment; it rose again wilder than before, and in a few minutes the friends of Reillaghan were about to throw themselves upon the body under the strong impulse of sorrow and affection.

The mendicant, however, stepped forward. "Hould back," said he; "it's hard to ax yees to do it, but still you must. Let the neighbours about us here examine the body, in ordher to see whether it mightn't be possible that the dacent boy came by his death from somebody else's hand than his own. Hould forrid the lights," said he, "till we see how he's lyin', an' how the gun's lyin'."

"Darby," said young Frank, "I can't but be oblaged to you for that. You're the last man livin' ought to say what you said, afther you seein' us both forget an' forgive this day. I call upon you now to say whether you didn't see him an' me shakin' hands, an' buryin' all bad feelin' between us?"

"I'll spake to you jist now," replied the mendicant. "See here, neighbours, obsarve this: the boy was shot in the breast, an' here's

not a snow wreath, but a weeshy dhrift that a child ud step acrass widout an accident. I tell yees all that I suspect foul play in this."

"H——'s fire!" exclaimed the brother of the deceased, "what's that you say? What? Can it be—can it—can it—that you *murdhered* him, you villain, that's known to be nothin' but a villain? But I'll *do* for you!" He snatched at the gun as he spoke, and would probably have taken ample and fearful vengeance upon Frank had not the mendicant and others prevented him.

"Have sinse," said Darby; "this is not the way to behave, man: lave the gun lyin' where she is till we see more about us. Stand back there, an' let me look at these marks: ay, about five yards—there's the track of feet about five yards before him—here they turn about, an' go back. Here, Saviour o' the world! see here! the mark, clane an' clear, of the butt o' the gun! Now if that boy stretched afore us had the gun in *his* hand the time she went off, could the mark of it be *here?* Bring me down the gun—an' the curse o' God upon her for an unlucky thief, whoever had her! It's thrue!—it's too thrue!" he continued—"the man that had the gun stood on *this spot.*"

"It's a falsity," said Frank, "it's a damnable falsity. Rody Teague, I call upon you to spake for me. Didn't you see, when we went to the hills, that it was Mike carried the gun, an' not me?"

"I did," replied Rody; "I can swear to that."

"Ay," exclaimed Frank, with triumph, "an' you yourself, Darby, saw us, as I said, makin' up whatsomever little difference there was betwixt us."

"I did," replied the mendicant, sternly; "but I heard you say, no longer ago than last night—*say!* why, you *shwore* it, man alive!—that if *you* wouldn't have Peggy Gartland, *he* never should. In your own stable I heard it, an' I was the manes of disappointing you and your gang when you thought to take away the girl by force. You're well known too often to carry a fair face when the heart under it is black wid you."

"All I can say is," observed young Reillaghan, "that if it comes out agin you that you played him foul, all the earth won't save your life. I'll have your heart's blood, if I should hang for it a thousand times."

This dialogue was frequently interrupted by the sobbings and clamour of the women, and the detached conversation of some of the men, who were communicating to each other their respective opinions upon the melancholy event which had happened.

Darby More now brought Reillaghan's father aside, and thus addressed him:—

"*Gluntho!*[1]—to tell God's thruth, I've strong suspicions that your son was murdhered. This sacred thing, that I put the crass upon people's breasts wid, saves people from *hangin'* an' unnatural deaths. Frank spoke to me last night, no longer ago, to come up an' mark it an *him* to-morrow. My opinion is that he intinded to murdher him at

[1] Listen.

that time, an' wanted to have a protection agin what migh thappen to him in regard o' the black deed."

"Can we prove it agin him?" inquired the disconsolate father. "I know it'll be hard, as there was no one present but themselves; an' if he did it, surely he'll not confess it."

"We may make him do it, maybe," said the mendicant. "The villain's aisily frightened, an' fond o' charms an' *pishthrogues*,[1] an' sich holy things, for all his wickedness. Don't say a word. We'll take him by surprise. I'll call upon him to TOUCH THE CORPSE. Make them women—an' och, it's hard to expect it—make them stop clappin' their hands an' cryin'; an' let there be dead silence, if you can."

During this and some other observations made by Darby, Frank had got the gun in his possession, and whilst seeming to be engaged in looking at it and examining the lock, he actually contrived to reload it without having been observed.

"Now, neighbours," said Darby, "hould your tongues for a weeshy start, till I ax Frank M'Kenna a question or two. Frank M'Kenna, as you hope to meet God at judgment, did you take his life that's lyin' a corpse before us?"

"I did *not*," replied M'Kenna; "I could clear myself, on all the books in Europe, that he met his death as I tould yees; an' more nor that," he added, dropping upon his knees and uncovering his head, "*may I die widout priest or prayer—widout help, hope, or happiness*, UPON THE SPOT WHERE HE'S NOW STRETCHED, *if I murdhered or shot him*."

"I say amin to that," replied Darby. "Oxis Doxis Glorioxis! So far, that's right, if the blood of him's not an you. But there's one thing more to be done: will you walk over, *undher the eye of God*, AN' TOUCH THE CORPSE? Hould back, neighbours, an' let him come over alone: I an' Owen Reillaghan will stand here wid the lights to see if the corpse bleeds."

"Give me, too, a light," said M'Kenna's father; "my son must get fair play, anyway: *I* must be a witness myself to it, an' will, too."

"It's but rasonable," said Owen Reillaghan; "come over beside Darby an' myself: I'm willin' that your son should stand or fall by what'll happen."

Frank's father, with a taper in his hand, immediately went, with a pale face and trembling steps, to the place appointed for him beside the corpse, where he took his stand.

When young M'Kenna heard Darby's last question he seemed as if seized by an inward spasm: the start which he gave, and his gaspings for breath, were visible to all present. Had he seen the spirit of the murdered man before him his horror could not have been greater; for this ceremony had been considered a most decisive test in cases of suspicion of murder—an ordeal, indeed, to which few murderers wished to submit themselves. In addition to this, we may observe

[1] Superstitious spells and witcheries.

that Darby's knowledge of the young man's character was correct: with all his crimes he was weak-minded and superstitious.

He stood silent for some time after the ordeal had been proposed to him; his hair became literally erect with the dread of this formidable scrutiny, his cheeks turned white, and the cold perspiration fell from him in large drops. All his strength appeared to have departed from him; he stood as if hesitating, and even the energy necessary to stand seemed to be the result of an effort.

"Remember," said Darby, pulling out the large crucifix which was attached to his beads, "that the eye of God is upon you. If you've committed the murdher, thrimble; if not, Frank, you've little to fear in touchin' the corpse."

Frank had not yet uttered a word; but, leaning himself on the gun, he looked wildly around him, cast his eyes up to the stormy sky, then turned them with a dead glare upon the corpse and the crucifix.

"Do you confiss the murdher?" said Darby.

"Murdher!" rejoined Frank: "no; I confess *no* murdher: you villain, do you *want* to make me guilty? do you want to make me guilty, you deep villain?"

It seemed as if the current of his thoughts and feelings had taken a new direction, though it is probable that the excitement which appeared to be rising within him was only the courage of fear.

"You all wish to find me guilty," he added; "but I'll show yees that I'm not guilty."

He immediately walked towards the corpse, and stooping down, touched the body with one hand, holding the gun in the other. The interest of that moment was intense, and all eyes were strained towards the spot. Behind the corpse, at each shoulder—for the body lay against a small snow wreath, in a recumbent position—stood the father of the deceased and the father of the accused, each wound up by feelings of a directly opposite character to a pitch of dreadful excitement. Over them, in his fantastic dress and white beard, stood the tall mendicant, who held up his crucifix to Frank, with an awful menace upon his strongly marked countenance. At a little distance to the left of the body stood the other men who were assembled, having their torches held aloft in their hands, and their forms bent towards the corpse, their faces indicating expectation, dread, and horror. The female relations of the deceased stood nearest his remains, their torches extended in the same direction, their visages exhibiting the passions of despair and grief in their wildest characters, but as if arrested by some supernatural object immediately before their eyes, that produced a new and more awful feeling than grief. When the body was touched, Frank stood as if himself bound by a spell to the spot. At length he turned his eyes to the mendicant, who stood silent and motionless, with the crucifix still extended in his hand.

"Are you satisfied *now?*" said he.

"That's wanst," said the pilgrim: "you're to touch it three times."

Frank hesitated a moment, but immediately stooped again, and touched it twice in succession; but it remained still and unchanged

as before. His father broke the silence by a fervent ejaculation of thanksgiving to God for the vindication of his son's character which he had just witnessed.

"Now!" exclaimed M'Kenna, in a loud, exulting tone, "you all see that I did *not* murdher him!"

"YOU DID!" said a voice, which was immediately recognized to be that of the deceased.

M'Kenna shrieked aloud, and immediately fled with his gun towards the mountains, pursued by Reillaghan's other son. The crowd rushed in towards the body, whilst sorrow, affright, exultation, and wonder marked the extraordinary scene which ensued.

"Queen o' Heaven!" exclaimed old M'Kenna, "who could believe this only they hard it!"

"The murdher wouldn't lie!" shrieked out Mrs. Reillaghan—"the murdher wouldn't lie!—the blood o' my darlin' son spoke it!—his blood spoke it; or God, or his angel, spoke it for him!"

"It's beyant anything ever known!" some exclaimed, "to come back an' tell the deed upon his murdherer! God presarve us an' save us this night! I wish we wor at home out o' this wild place!"

Others said they had heard of such things; but this, having happened before their eyes, surpassed anything that could be conceived.

The mendicant now advanced, and once more mysteriously held up his crucifix.

"Keep silence!" said he, in a solemn, sonorous voice. "Keep silence, I say, an' kneel down all o' yees before what I've in my hand. If you want to know who or what the voice came from, I can tell yees —IT WAS THE CRUCIFIX THAT SPOKE!"

This communication was received with a feeling of devotion too deep for words. His injunction was instantly complied with: they knelt, and bent down in worship before it in the mountain wilds.

"Ay," said he, "little yees know the virtues of that crucifix! It was consecrated by a friar so holy that it was well known there was but the shadow of him upon the earth, the other part of him bein' night an' day in heaven among the archangels. It shows the power of this crass, anyway; an' you may tell your frinds that I'll sell blades touched wid it to the faithful at sixpence apiece. They can be put an your *padareens* as Dicades, wid a blessin'. Oxis Doxis Glorioxis—Amin! Let us now bear the corpse home, antil it's dressed an' laid out dacently, as it ought to be."

The body was then placed upon an easy litter, formed of great-coats buttoned together, and supported by the strongest men present, who held it one or two at each corner. In this manner they advanced at a slow pace until they reached Owen Reillaghan's house, where they found several of the country people assembled waiting for their return.

It was not until the body had been placed in an inner room, where none were admitted until it should be laid out, that the members of the family first noticed the prolonged absence of Reillaghan's other son. The moment it had been alluded to they were seized with new alarm and consternation.

"*Hanim an diouol!*" said Reillaghan, bitterly, in Irish, "but I doubt the red-handed villain has cut short the lives of *two* brave sons. I only hope he may stop in the counthry: I'm not widout frinds an' followers that ud think it no sin in a just cause to pay him in his own coin, an' to take from him 'an his a pound o' blood for every ounce of ours they shed."

A number of his friends instantly volunteered to retrace their way to the mountains, and search for the other son. "There's little danger of his life," said a relation; "it's a short time Frank ud stand him, particularly as the gun wasn't charged. We'll go, at any rate, for fraid he might lose himself in the mountains or walk into some o' the lochs on his way home. We had as good bring some whisky wid us, for he may want it badly."

While they had been speaking, however, the snow began to fall, and the wind to blow in a manner that promised a heavy and violent storm. They proceeded, notwithstanding, on their search, and, on whistling for the dog, discovered that he was not to be found.

"He went wid us to the mountains, I know," said the former speaker; "an' I think it likely he'll be found wid Owen, wherever he is. "Come, boys, step out: it's a dismal night, anyway, the Lord knows—och, och!" And with sorrowful but vigorous steps they went in quest of the missing brother.

Nothing but the preternatural character of the words which were so mysteriously pronounced immediately before Owen's pursuit of M'Kenna could have prevented that circumstance, together with the flight of the latter, from exciting greater attention among the crowd. His absence, however, now that they had time to reflect on it, produced unusual alarm, not only on account of M'Kenna's bad character, but from the apprehension of Owen being lost in the mountains.

The inextinguishable determination of revenge with which an Irishman pursues any person who, either directly or indirectly, takes the life of a near relation, or invades the peace of his domestic affections, was strongly illustrated by the nature of Owen's pursuit after M'Kenna, considering the appalling circumstances under which he undertook it. It is certainly more than probable that M'Kenna, instead of flying, would have defended himself with the loaded gun, had not his superstitious fears been excited by the words which so mysteriously charged him with the murder. The direction he accidentally took led both himself and his pursuer into the wildest recesses of the mountains. The chase was close and desperate, and certainly might have been fatal to Reillaghan had M'Kenna thought of using the gun. His terror, however, exhausted him, and overcame his presence of mind to such a degree that, so far from using the weapon in his defence, he threw it aside, in order to gain ground upon his pursuer. This he did but slowly, and the pursuit was as yet uncertain. At length Owen found the distance between himself and his brother's murderer increasing; the night was dark, and he himself feeble and breathless: he therefore gave over all hope of securing him, and returned to follow those who had accompanied him to the spot where his brother's body

lay. It was when retracing his path that the nature of his situation occurred to him : the snow had not begun to fall, but the appearance of the sky was strongly calculated to depress him.

Every person knows with what remarkable suddenness snowstorms descend. He had scarcely advanced homewards more than twenty minutes, when the grey tempest spread its dusky wings over the heavens, and a darker shade rapidly settled upon the white hills—now becoming indistinct in the gloom of the air, which was all in commotion, and groaned aloud with the noise of the advancing storm. When he saw the deep gloom, and felt the chilling coldness pierce his flesh so bitterly, he turned himself in the direction which led by the shortest possible cut towards his father's house. He was at this time nearly three miles from any human habitation ; and as he looked into the darkness his heart began to palpitate with an alarm almost bordering on hopelessness. His dog, which had, up till this boding change, gone on before him, now partook in his master's apprehensions, and trotted anxiously at his feet.

In the meantime the winds howled in a melancholy manner along the mountains, and carried with them from the upper clouds the rapidly descending sleet. The storm current, too, was against him, and as the air began to work in dark confusion, he felt for the first time how utterly helpless a thing he was under the fierce tempest in this dreadful solitude.

At length the rushing sound which he first heard in the distance approached him in all its terrors ; and in a short time he was staggering like a drunken man under the incessant drifts which swept over him and about him. Nothing could exceed the horrors of the atmosphere at this moment. From the surface of the earth the whirlwinds swept immense snow-clouds that rose up instantaneously, and shot off along the brows and ravines of the solitary wild, sometimes descending into the valleys, and again rushing up the almost perpendicular sides of the mountains, with a speed, strength, and noise that mocked at everything possessing life ; whilst in the air the tumult and the darkness continued to deepen in the most awful manner. The winds seemed to meet from every point of the compass, and the falling drifts flew backward and forward in every direction ; the cold became intense, and Owen's efforts to advance homewards were beginning to fail. He was driven about like an autumn leaf, and his dog, which kept close to him, had nearly equal difficulty in proceeding. No sound but that of the tempest could now be heard, except the screaming of the birds as they were tossed on sidewing through the commotion which prevailed.

In this manner was Owen whirled about, till he lost all knowledge of his local situation, being ignorant whether he advanced towards home or otherwise. His mouth and eyes were almost filled with driving sleet ; sometimes a cloud of light sand-like drift would almost bury him, as it crossed, or followed, or opposed his path ; sometimes he would sink to the middle in a snow-wreath, from which he extricated himself with great difficulty ; and among the many terrors by

which he was beset, that of walking into a lake, or over a precipice, was not the least paralysing. Owen was a young man of great personal strength and activity, for the possession of which, next to his brother, he had been distinguished among his companions; but he now became totally exhausted: the chase after M'Kenna, his former exertion, his struggles, his repeated falls, his powerful attempts to get into the vicinity of life, the desperate strength he put forth in breaking through the vortex of the whirlwind, all had left him faint and completely at the mercy of the elements.

The cold sleet scales were now frozen to ice on his cheeks; his clothes were completely encrusted with the hard snow which had been beaten into them by the strength of the blast, and his joints were getting stiff and benumbed. The tumult of the tempest, the whirling of the snow-clouds, and the thick snow, now falling, and again tossed upwards by sudden gusts to the sky, deprived him of all power of reflection, and rendered him, though not altogether blind or deaf, yet incapable of forming any distinct opinion upon what he saw or heard. Still, actuated by the unconscious principle of self-preservation, he tottered on, cold, feeble, and breathless, now driven back like a reed by the strong rush of the storm, or prostrated almost to suffocation under the whirlwinds that started up like savage creatures of life about him.

During all this time his faithful dog never abandoned him; but his wild howlings only heightened the horrors of his situation. When he fell, the affectionate creature would catch the flap of his coat, or his arm, in his teeth, and attempt to raise him; and as long as his master had presence of mind, with the unerring certainty of instinct he would turn him, when taking a wrong direction, into that which led homewards.

Owen was not, however, reduced to this state without experiencing sensations of which no language could convey adequate notions. At first he struggled heroically with the storm; but when utter darkness threw its impervious shades over the desolation around him, and the fury of the elements grew so tremendous, all the strong propensities to life became roused, the convulsive throes of a young heart on the steep of death threw a wild and corresponding energy into his vigorous frame, and occasioned him to cling to existence with a tenacity rendered still stronger by the terrible consciousness of his unprepared state, and the horror of being plunged into eternity unsupported by the rites of his Church, whilst the crime of attempting to take away human life lay on his soul. Those domestic affections, too, which in Irishmen are so strong, became excited; his home, his fireside, the faces of his kindred, already impressed with affliction for the death of one brother, and the mild countenance of the fair girl to whom he was about to be united, were conjured up in the powerful imagery of natural feeling, the fountains of which were opened in his heart, and his agonizing cry for life rose wildly from the mountain desert upon the voice of the tempest. Then, indeed, when the gulf of a two-fold death yawned before him, did the struggling spirit send up its

shrieking prayer to heaven with desperate impulse. These struggles, however, as well as those of the body, became gradually weaker as the storm tossed him about, and with the chill of its breath withered him into total helplessness. He reeled on, stiff and insensible, without knowing whither he went, falling with every blast, and possessing scarcely any faculty of life except mere animation.

After about an hour, however, the storm subsided, and the clouds broke away into light fleecy columns before the wind; the air, too, became less cold, and the face of nature more visible. The driving sleet and hard granular snow now ceased to fall; but were succeeded by large feathery flakes, that descended slowly upon the still air.

Had this trying scene lasted much longer, Owen must soon have been a stiffened corpse. The child-like strength, however, which just enabled him to bear up without sinking in despair to die, now supported him when there was less demand for energy. The dog, too, by rubbing itself against him, and licking his face, enabled him, by a last effort, to recollect himself, so as to have a glimmering perception of his situation. His confidence returned, and with it a greater degree of strength. He shook, as well as he could, the snow from his clothes, where it had accumulated heavily, and felt himself able to proceed, slowly, it is true, towards his father's house, which he had nearly reached when he met his friends, who were once more hurrying out to the mountains in quest of him, having been compelled to return, in consequence of the storm, when they had first set out. The whisky, their companionship, and their assistance soon revived him. One or two were despatched home before them, to apprise the afflicted family of his safety; and the intelligence was hailed with melancholy joy by the Reillaghans. A faint light played for a moment over the gloom which had settled among them, but it was brief; for on ascertaining the safety of their second son, their grief rushed back with renewed violence, and nothing could be heard but the voice of sorrow and affliction.

Darby More, who had assumed the control of the family, did everything in his power to console them; his efforts, however, were viewed with a feeling little short of indignation.

"Darby," said the afflicted mother, "you have, undher God, in some sinse, my fair son's death to account for. You had a dhrame, but you wouldn't tell it to us. If you had, my boy might be livin' this day, for it would be asy for him to be an his guard."

"Musha, poor woman," replied Darby, "sure you don't know, you afflicted crathur, what you're speakin' about. Tell my dhrame! Why thin, it's myself towld it to him from beginnin' to ind, and that whin we wor goin' to mass this day itself. I desired him, on the peril of his life, not to go out a tracin' or toards the mountains, good or bad."

"You said you had a prayer that ud keep it back," observed the mother, "an' why didn't you say it?"

"I did say it," replied Darby, "an' that afore a bit crossed my throath this mornin'; but, you see, he broke his promise of not goin' to the mountains, an' *that* was what made the dhrame come thrue."

"Well, well, Darby, I beg your pardon, an' God's pardon, for judging

you in the wrong. Oh, wurraw sthrue! my brave son, is it there you're lyin' wid us, avourneen machree!" and she again renewed her grief.

"Oh, thin, I'm sure I forgive you," said Darby; "but keep your grief in for a start, till I say the *Deprowhinjis* over him, for the pace an' repose of his sowl. Kneel down, all of yees."

He repeated this prayer in language which it would require one of Edward Irving's adepts in the unknown tongues to interpret. When he had recited about the half of it, Owen and those who had gone to seek him entered the house, and, after the example of the others, reverently knelt down until he finished it.

Owen's appearance once more renewed their grief. The body of his brother had been removed to a bed beyond the fire in the kitchen; and when Owen looked upon the features of his beloved companion, he approached and stooped down to kiss his lips. He was still too feeble, however, to bend by his own strength; and it is also probable that the warm air of the house relaxed him. Be this, however, as it may, he fell forward, but supported himself by his hands, which were placed upon the body; a deep groan was heard, and the apparently dead man opened his eyes, and feebly exclaimed—"A dhrink! a dhrink!"

Darby More had, on concluding the *De profundis*, seated himself beside the bed on which Mike lay; but on hearing the groan, and the call for drink, he leaped rapidly to his legs, and exclaimed, "My sowl to hell an' the divil, Owen Reillaghan, but your son's alive! Off wid two or three of yees, as hard as the divil can dhrive yees, for the priest an' docthor!! Off wid yees! ye damned lazy spalpeens, aren't ye near there by this? Give us my cant! Are yees gone? Oh, by this an' by that—hell—eh—aren't yees gone?" but ere he could finish the sentence they had set out.

"Now," he exclaimed, in a voice whose tremendous tones were strongly at variance with his own injunctions—"now, neighbours, d——n yees, keep silence. Mrs. Reillaghan, get a bottle of whisky an' a mug o' wather. Make haste. *Hanim an diouol!* don't be all night!"

The poor mother, however, could not stir; the unexpected revulsion of feeling which she had so suddenly experienced was more than she could sustain. A long fainting fit was the consequence, and Darby's commands were obeyed by the wife of a friendly neighbour.

The mendicant immediately wetted Mike's lips, and poured some spirits, copiously diluted with water, down his throat; after which he held the whisky bottle, like a connoisseur, between himself and the light. "I hope," said he, "this whisky is the ra-al crathur." He put the bottle to his mouth as he spoke, and on holding it a second time before his eye, he shook his head complacently. "Ay," said he, "if anything could bring the dead back to this world, my sowl to glory, but *that* would. Oh, thin, it would give the dead life, sure enough!" He put it once more to his lips, from which it was not separated without relinquishing a considerable portion of its contents.

"*Dhea Grashthias!*" he exclaimed; "throth, I find myself the betther o' that sup, in regard that it's good for this touch of configuration that I'm throubled wid inwardly! Oxis Doxis Glorioxis! Amin!" These words he spoke in a low, placid voice, lest the wounded man might be discomposed by his observations.

The rapidity with which the account of Mike's restoration to life spread among the neighbours was surprising. Those who had gone for the priest and doctor communicated it to all they met, and these again to others: so that in a short time the house was surrounded by great numbers of their acquaintances, all anxious to hear the particulars more minutely. Darby, who never omitted an opportunity of impressing the people with a belief in his own sanctity, and in that of his crucifix, came out among them, and answered their inquiries by a solemn shake of his head, and a mysterious indication of his finger to the crucifix, but said nothing more. This was enough. The murmur of reverence and wonder spread among them, and ere long there were few present who did not believe that Reillaghan had been restored to life by a touch of Darby's crucifix; an opinion which is not wholly exploded to this day.

Peggy Gartland, who, fortunately, had not heard the report of her lover's death until it was contradicted by the account of his revival, now entered, and by her pale countenance betrayed strong symptoms of affection and sympathy. She sat by his side, gazing mournfully on his features, and with difficulty suppressed her tears.

For some time before her arrival the mother and sisters of Mike had been removed to another room, lest the tumultuous expression of their mingled joy and sorrow might disturb him. The fair, artless girl, although satisfied that he still lived, entertained no hopes of his recovery; but she ventured, in a low, trembling voice, to inquire from Darby some particulars of the melancholy transaction which was likely to deprive her of her betrothed husband.

"Where did the shot sthrike him, Darby?"

"Clane through the body, a villish; jist where Captain Cramer was shot at the battle o' Bunker's Hill, where he lay as good as dead for twelve hours, an' was near bein' berrid a *corp*, an' him alive all the time, only that as they were pullin' him off o' the cart, he gev a shout, an' thin, *a colleen dhas*, they began to think he might be livin' still. Sure enough, he was, too, an' lived successfully, till he died wid dhrinkin' brandy as a cure for the gout; the Lord be praised!"

"Where's the villain, Darby?"

"He's in the mountains, no doubt, where he had thim to fight wid that's a match for him—God, an' the dark storm that fell a while agone. *They'll* pay him, never fear, for his thrachery to the noble boy that chastised him for your sake, *acushla oge!* Sthrong was your hand, *a Veehal*, an' ginerous was your affectionate heart; an' well you loved the fair girl that's sittin' beside you! Throth, Peggy, my heart's black wid sorrow about the darlin' young man. Still life's in him; an' while there's life there's hope; glory be to God!"

The eulogium of the pilgrim, who was, in truth, much attached to

Mike, moved the heart of the affectionate girl, whose love and sympathy were pure as the dew on the grass-blade, and now as easily affected by the slightest touch. She remained silent for a time, but secretly glided her hand towards that of her lover, which she clasped in hers, and by a gentle and timid pressure strove to intimate to him that she was beside him. Long, but unavailing, was the struggle to repress her sorrow: her bosom heaved; she gave two or three loud sobs, and burst into tears and lamentations.

"Don't cry, avourneen," whispered Darby—"don't cry; I'll warrant you that Darby More will ate share of your weddin' dinner an' his yit. There's a small taste of colour comin' to his face, which, I think, undher God, is owin' to my touchin' him wid the cruciwhix. Don't cry, a colleen, he'll get over it, an' more than it, yit, colleen bawn!"

Darby then hurried her into the room where Mike's mother and sisters were. On entering she threw herself into the arms of the former, laid her face on her bosom, and wept bitterly. This renewed the mother's grief: she clasped the interesting girl in a sorrowful embrace; so did his sisters. They threw themselves into each other's arms, and poured forth those touching but wild bursts of pathetic language which are never heard but when the heart is struck by some desolating calamity.

"Husht!" said a neighbouring man who was present; "husht! it's a shame for yees, an' the boy not dead yit."

"I'm not ashamed," said Peggy; "why should I be ashamed of bein' sarry for the likes of Mike Reillaghan? Where was his aquil? Wasn't all hearts upon him? Didn't the very poor on the road bless him whin he passed? Who ever had a bad word agin him but the villain that murdhered him? Murdhered him! Heaven above me! an' why? For *my* sake! For my sake the pride o' the parish is laid low! Ashamed! Is it for cryin' for my bethrothed husband, that was sworn to me, an' I to him, before the eye of God above us? This day week I was to be his bride; an' now—now——Oh, Vread Reillaghan, take me to you! Let me go to his mother! My heart's broke, Vread Reillaghan! Let me go to her: nobody's grief for him is like ours. You're his mother, an' I'm his wife in the sight o' God. Proud was I out of him: my eyes brightened when they seen him, an' my heart got light when I heard his voice; an' now what's afore me?—what's afore me but sorrowful days an' a broken heart!"

Mrs. Reillaghan placed her tenderly and affectionately beside her, on the bed whereon she herself sat. With the corner of her handkerchief she wiped the tears from the weeping girl, although her own flowed fast. Her daughters, also, gathered about her, and, in language of the most endearing kind, endeavoured to soothe and console her.

"He may live yet, Peggy, avourneen," said his mother: "my brave an' noble son may live yet, an' you may be both happy. Don't be cryin' so much, *asthore galh machree*;[1] sure he's in the hands o' God, avourneen; an' your young heart won't be broke, I hope. Och, the

[1] The beloved white (girl) of my heart.

Lord pity her young feelins!" exclaimed the mother, affected even by the consolation she offered to the betrothed bride of her son. "Is it any wondher she'd sink undher sich a blow! for, sure enough, where was the likes of him? No, asthore; it's no wondher—it's no wondher! Lonesome will your heart be widout him: for I know what he'd feel if a hair of *your* head was injured."

"Oh, I know it—I know it! There was music in his voice, an' *grah*[1] an' kindness to every crathur an God's earth; but to me—to me—oh, no one knew his love to me but myself an' God. Oh, if I was dead, that I couldn't feel this, or if my life could save his! Why didn't the villain—the black villain, wid God's curse upon him -why didn't he shoot *me*, thin I could never be Mike's wife, an' his hand o' murdher might be satisfied? If he had, I wouldn't feel as I do. Ay; the warmest, an' the best, an' the dearest blood of my heart, I could shed for him. That heart was his, an' he had a right to it. Our love wasn't of yisterday: afore the links of my hair came to my showlders I loved him, an' thought of him; an' many a time he tould me that I was his first! God knows he was my first, an' he will be my last, let him live or die."

"Well, but, Peggy achora," said his sister, "maybe it's sinful to be cryin' this-a-way, an' he not dead."

"God forgive me, if it's a sin," replied Peggy; "I'd not wish to do anything sinful or displasin' to God; an' I'll sthrive to keep down my grief: I will, as well as I can."

She put her hands on her face, and by an effort of firmness subdued the tone of her grief to a low continuous murmur of sorrow.

"An' along wid that," said the sister, "maybe the noise is disturbin' him. Darby put us all out o' the kitchen, to have pace an' quietness about him."

"An' 'twas well thought o' Darby," she replied, "an' may the blessin' o' God rest upon him for it! A male's mate, or a night's lodgin' he'll never want undher my father's roof for that goodness to *him*. I'll be quiet thin."

There was now a short pause, during which those in the room heard a smack, accompanied by the words, "*Dhea Grashthias!* Throth, I'm the betther o' that sup, so I am. Nothin' keeps this thief of a configuration down but it. *Dhea Grashthias* for that! Oh, thin, this *is* the stuff! It warms a body to the tops o' the nails!"

"Don't spare it, Darby," said old Reillaghan, "if it does you good."

"Avourneen," said Darby, "it's only what gives me a little relief I ever take, *jist by way of cure*, for it's the only thing does me good when I'm this-a-way."

Several persons in the neighbourhood were, in the meantime, flocking to Reillaghan's house. A worthy man, accompanied by his wife, entered as the pilgrim had concluded. The woman, in accordance with the custom of the country, raised the Irish cry, in a loud, melancholy wail, that might be heard at a great distance.

[1] Affection.

Darby, who prided himself on maintaining silence, could not preserve the consistency of his character upon this occasion, any more than on that of Mike's recent symptoms of life.

"Your sowl to the divil, you faggot!" he exclaimed, "what do you mane? The divil whip the tongue out o' you, are you goin' to come here only to disturb the boy that's not dead yet. Get out o' this, or be asy wid your skhreechin', or, by the crass that died for us, on'y you're a woman, I'd tumble you wid a lick o' my cant. Keep asy, you vagrant, an' the dacent boy not dead yet. Hell bellows you, what do you mane?"

"Not dead!" exclaimed the woman, with her body bent in the proper attitude, her hands extended, and the crying face turned with amazement to Darby. "Not dead! Wurrah, man alive, isn't he murdhered?"

"Hell resave the matther for that!" replied Darby. "I tell you, he's livin', an' will live, I hope, barrin' your skirlin' dhrives the life that's in him out of him. Go into the room there to the women, an' make yourself scarce out o' this, or, by the padareens about me, I'll malivogue you."

"We can't be angry wid the dacent woman," observed old Reillaghan, "in regard that she came to show her friendship and respect."

"I'd be angry wid St. Pether," said Darby, "an' ud not scruple to give him a lick o' my c——Lord presarve us! what was I goin' to say! Why, throth, I believe the little wits I had are all gone a shaughran! I must fast a Friday or two for the same words agin St. Pether. Oxis Doxis Glorioxis—Amin."

Hope is strong in love and in life. Peggy, now that grief had eased her heart of its load of accumulated sorrow, began to reflect upon Darby's anecdote of Captain Cramer, which she related to those about her. They all rejoiced to hear that it was possible to be wounded so severely and live. They also consoled and supported each other, and expressed their trust that Mike might also recover. The opinion of the doctor was waited for with such anxiety as a felon feels when the foreman of the jury hands down the verdict which consigns him to life or death.

Whether Darby's prescription was the result of chance or sagacity we know not. We are bound, however, to declare that Reillaghan's strength was in some degree restored, although the pain he suffered amounted to torture. The surgeon (who was also a physician, and, moreover, supplied his own medicines) and the priest, as they lived in the same town, both arrived together. The latter administered the rites of his Church to him; and the former, who was a skilful man, left nothing undone to accomplish his restoration to health. He had been shot through the body with a *bullet*—a circumstance which was not known until the arrival of the surgeon. This gentleman expressed much astonishment at his surviving the wound, but said that circumstances of a similar nature had occurred, particularly on the field of battle, although he admitted that they were few.

Darby, however, who resolved to have something like a decided

opinion from him, without at all considering whether such a thing was possible, pressed him strongly upon the point.

"Arrah, blur-an-ager, Docthor Swither, say one thing or other. Is he to live or die? Plain talk, docthor, is all we want, an' no *feasthalagh*." [1]

"The bullet, I am inclined to think," replied the doctor, "must either not have touched a vital part, or touched it only slightly. I have known cases similar, it is true; but it is impossible for me to pronounce a decisive opinion upon him just now."

"The divil resave the yarrib [2] ever I'll gather for you agin, so long as my name's Darby More, except you say either 'life' or 'death,'" said Darby, who forgot his character of sanctity altogether.

"Darby, achora," said Mrs. Reillaghan, "don't crass the gintleman, an' him sthrivin' to do his best. Here, Paddhy Gormly, bring some wather till the docthor washes his hands."

"Darby," replied the doctor, to whom he was well known, "you are a good herbalist, but even although you should not serve me as usual in that capacity, yet I cannot say exactly either life or death. The case is too critical a one; but I do not despair, Darby, if that will satisfy you."

"More power to you, docthor, achora. Hell-an-age, where's that bottle? bring it here. Thank you, Vread. Docthor, here's wishin' you all happiness, an' may you set Mike on his legs wanst more! See docthor—see, man alive—look at this purty girl here, wid her wet cheeks; give her some hope, ahagur, if you can; keep the crathur's spirits up, an' I'll furnish you wid every yarrib in Europe, from the nettle to the rose."

"Don't despair, my good girl," said the doctor, addressing Peggy, "I hope, I trust, that he may recover, but he must be kept easy and quiet."

"May the blessin' of God, sir, light down on you for the same words," replied Peggy, in a voice tremulous with gratitude and joy.

"Are you done wid him, docthor?" said old Reillaghan.

"At present," replied the doctor, "I can do nothing more for him; but I shall see him early to-morrow morning."

"Bekase, sir," continued the worthy man, "here's Darby More, who's afflicted wid a conflamboration, or some sich thing, inwardly, an' if you could ase him, sir, I'd pay the damages, whatever they might be."

The doctor smiled slightly. "Darby's complaint," said he, "is beyond my practice; there is but one cure for it, and that is, if I have any skill, a little of what's in the bottle here, taken, as our prescriptions sometimes say, 'when the patient is inclined for it.'"

"By my sou—sanctity, docthor," said Darby, "you're a man o' skill, anyhow, an' that's well known, sir. Nothin', as Father Hoolaghan says, but the sup o' whisky does this sarra of a configuration good. It rises the wind off o' my stomach, docthor!"

[1] Nonsense. [2] Herb.

"It does, Darby, it does. Now let all be peace and quietness," continued the doctor: "take away a great part of this fire, and don't attempt to remove him to any other bed until I desire you. I shall call again to-morrow morning, early."

The doctor's attention to his patient was unremitting; everything that human skill, joined to long experience and natural talent, could do to restore the young man to his family was done; and in the course of a few weeks the friends of Reillaghan had the satisfaction of seeing him completely out of danger.

Mike declared, after his recovery, that, though incapable of motion on the mountains, he was not altogether insensible to what passed around him. The loud tones of their conversation he could hear. The oath which young M'Kenna uttered in a voice so wild and exalted, fell clearly on his ear, and he endeavoured to contradict it, in order that he might be secured and punished in the event of his death. He also said that the pain he suffered in the act of being conveyed home occasioned him to groan feebly; but that the sobs, and cries, and loud conversation of those who surrounded him prevented his moans from being heard. It is probable, after all, that were it not for the accidental fall of Owen upon his body, he might not have survived the wound, inasmuch as the medical skill which contributed to restore him, would not have been called in.

Though old Frank M'Kenna and his family felt an oppressive load of misery taken off their hearts by the prospect of Reillaghan's recovery, yet it was impossible for them to be insensible to the fate of their son, knowing as they did that he must have been out among the mountains during the storm. His unhappy mother and Rody sat up the whole night, expecting his return, but morning arrived without bringing him home. For six days afterwards the search for him was general and strict: his friends and neighbours traversed the mountain wastes until they left scarcely an acre of them unexplored. On the sixth day there came a thaw, and towards the close of the seventh he was found a "stiffened corpse," *upon the very spot where he had shot his rival*, and on which he had challenged the Almighty to stretch him in death, without priest or prayer, if he were guilty of the crime with which he had been charged. He was found lying with a circle drawn round him, his head pillowed upon the innocent blood which he had shed with the intention of murder, and a bloody cross marked upon his breast and forehead. It was thought that in the dread of approaching death he had formed it with his hand, which came accidentally in contact with the blood that lay in clots about him.

The manner of his death excited a profound and wholesome feeling among the people with respect to the crime which he attempted to commit. The circumstances attending it, and his oath upon the spot where he shot Reillaghan, are still spoken of by the fathers of the neighbouring villages, and even by some who were present at the search for his body. It was also doubly remarkable on account of a case of spectral illusion which it produced, and which was ascribed to the effect of M'Kenna's supernatural appearance at the time. The

daughter of a herdsman in the mountains was strongly affected by the spectacle of his dead body borne past her father's door. In about a fortnight afterwards she assured her family that he appeared to her. She saw the apparition, in the beginning, only at night; but ere long it ventured, as she imagined, to appear in daylight. Many imaginary conversations took place between them; and the fact of the peasantry flocking to the herd's house, to satisfy themselves as to the truth of the rumour, is yet well remembered in the parish. It was also affirmed that as the funeral of M'Kenna passed to the churchyard a hare crossed it, which someone present struck on the side with a stone. The hare, says the tradition, was not injured, but the sound of the stroke resembled that produced on striking an empty barrel.

We have nearly wound up our story, in which we have feebly endeavoured to illustrate scenes that were, some time ago, not unusual in Irish life. There is little more to be added, except that Mike Reillaghan almost miraculously recovered: that he and Peggy Gartland were happily married, and that Darby More lost his character as a dreamer in that part of the parish. Mike, with whom, however, he still continued a favourite, used frequently to allude to the *speaking crucifix*, the dream aforesaid, and his bit of fiction in assuring his mother that he had dissuaded him against "tracing" on that eventful day.

"Well, avourneen," Darby would exclaim, "the holiest of us has our failins; but, in throth, the truth of it is that myself didn't know what I was sayin', I was so *through other*,[1] for I remimber that I was badly afflicted wid this thief of a configuration inwardly at the time. That, you see, an' your own throubles, put my mind *ashaughran* for a start. But, upon my sanctity,—an' sure that's a great oath wid *me*—only for the holy carol you bought from me the night before, an' above all, touchin' you wid the blessed crucifix, you'd never ha' got over the same accident. Oh, you may smile an' shake your head, but it's thruth whether or not! Glory be to God!"

The priest of the parish, on ascertaining correctly the incidents mentioned in this sketch, determined to deprive the people of at least one pretext for their licentiousness. He represented the abuses connected with such a ceremony to the bishop: and from that night to the present time the inhabitants of Kilnaheery never had, in their own parish, an opportunity of hearing a Midnight Mass.

[1] Agitated.

THE DONAGH;

Or, The Horse Dealers.

CARNMORE, one of those small villages that are to be found in the outskirts of many parishes in Ireland, whose distinct boundaries are lost in the contiguous mountain-wastes, was situated at the foot of a deep gorge, or pass, overhung by two bleak hills, from the naked sides of which the storm swept over it, without discomposing the peaceful little nook of cabins that stood below. About a furlong farther down were two or three farm-houses, inhabited by a family named Cassidy, men of simple, inoffensive manners, and considerable wealth. They were, however, acute and wise in their generation; intelligent cattle-dealers, on whom it would have been a matter of some difficulty to impose an unsound horse, or a cow older than was intimated by her horn-rings, even when conscientiously dressed up for sale by the ingenious aid of the file or burning-iron. Between their houses and the hamlet rose a conical pile of rocks, loosely heaped together, from which the place took its name of Carnmore.

About three years before the time of this story there came two men with their families to reside in the upper village, and the house which they chose as a residence was one at some distance from those which composed the little group we have just been describing. They said their name was Meehan, although the general report went that this was not true; that the name was an assumed one, and that some dark mystery, which none could penetrate, shrouded their history and character. They were certainly remarkable men. The elder, named Anthony, was a dark, black-browed person, stern in his manner and atrociously cruel in his disposition. His form was Herculean, his bones strong and hard as iron, and his sinews stood out in undeniable evidence of a life hitherto spent in severe toil and exertion, to bear which he appeared to an amazing degree capable. His brother Denis was a small man, less savage and daring in his character, and consequently more vacillating and cautious than Anthony; for the points in which he resembled him were superinduced upon his natural disposition by the close connection that subsisted between them, and by the identity of their former pursuits in life, which, beyond doubt, had been such as could not bear investigation.

The old proverb of "birds of a feather flock together" is certainly a true one, and in this case it was once more verified. Before the arrival of these men in the village there had been five or six bad characters in the neighbourhood, whose delinquencies were pretty well known. With these persons the strangers, by that sympathy which assimilates with congenial good or evil, soon became acquainted; and although their intimacy was as secret and cautious as possible, still it

had been observed, and was known ; for they had frequently been seen skulking together at daybreak, or in the dusk of evening.

It is unnecessary to say that Meehan and his brother did not mingle much in the society of Carnmore. In fact, the villagers and they mutually avoided each other. A mere return of the common phrases of salutation was generally the most that passed between them : they never entered into that familiarity which leads to mutual intercourse, and justifies one neighbour in freely entering the cabin of another, to spend a winter's night, or a summer's evening, in amusing conversation. Few had ever been in the house of the Meehans since it became theirs ; nor were the means of their subsistence known. They led an idle life, had no scarcity of food, were decently clothed, and never wanted money ; circumstances which occasioned no small degree of conjecture in Carnmore and its vicinity.

Some said they lived by theft ; others that they were coiners ; and there were many who imagined, from the diabolical countenance of the elder brother, that he had sold himself to the devil, who, they affirmed, set his mark upon him, and was his paymaster. Upon this hypothesis several were ready to prove that he had neither breath nor shadow : they had seen him, they said, standing under a hedge-row of *elder*—that unholy tree which furnished wood for the cross, and on which Judas hanged himself—yet, although it was noon-day in the month of July, his person threw out no shadow. Worthy souls ! because the man stood in the shade at the time. But with these simple explanations superstition had nothing to do, although we are bound in justice to the reverend old lady to affirm that she was kept exceedingly busy in Carnmore. If a man had a sick cow, she was elf-shot ; if his child became consumptive, it had been overlooked, or received a *blast* from the fairies ; if the hooping-cough was rife, all the afflicted children were put three times under an ass ; or when they happened to have the "mumps," were led before sunrise to a south-running stream with a halter hanging about their necks, under an obligation of silence during the ceremony. In short, there could not possibly be a more superstitious spot than that which these men of mystery had selected for their residence. Another circumstance which caused the people to look upon them with additional dread was their neglect of mass on Sundays and holidays, though they avowed themselves Roman Catholics. They did not, it is true, join in the dances, drinking-matches, football, and other sports with which the Carnmore folk celebrated the Lord's Day; but they scrupled not, on the other hand, to mend their garden-ditch or mould a row of cabbages on the Sabbath—a circumstance for which two or three of the Carnmore boys were, one Sunday evening when tipsy, well-nigh chastising them. Their usual manner, however, of spending that day was by sauntering lazily about the fields, or stretching themselves supinely on the sunny side of the hedges, their arms folded into their bosoms, and their hats lying over their faces to keep off the sun.

In the meantime, loss of property was becoming quite common in the neighbourhood. Sheep were stolen from the farmers, and cows

and horses from the more extensive graziers in the parish. The complaints against the authors of these depredations were loud and incessant; watches were set, combinations for mutual security formed, and subscriptions to a considerable amount entered into with a hope of being able, by the temptation of a large reward, to work upon the weakness or cupidity of some accomplice to betray the gang of villains who infested the neighbourhood. All, however, was in vain; every week brought some new act of plunder to light, perpetrated upon such unsuspecting persons as had hitherto escaped the notice of the robbers; but no trace could be discovered of the perpetrators. Although theft had from time to time been committed upon a small scale before the arrival of the Meehans in the village, yet it was undeniable that since that period the instances not only multiplied, but became of a more daring and extensive description. They arose in a gradual scale from the hen-roost to the stable; and with such ability were they planned and executed, that the people, who in every instance identified Meehan and his brother with them, began to believe and hint that, in consequence of their compact with the devil, they had power to render themselves invisible. Common fame, who can best treat such subjects, took up this, and never laid it aside until, by narrating several exploits which Meehan the elder was said to have performed in other parts of the kingdom, she wound it up by roundly informing the Carnmorians that, having been once taken prisoner for murder, he was caught by the leg when half through a hedge, but that, being most wickedly determined to save his neck, he left the leg with the officer who took him, shouting out that it was a new species of leg-bail; and yet he moved away with surprising speed upon two of as good legs as any man in his Majesty's dominions might wish to walk off upon from the insinuating advances of a bailiff or a constable!

The family of the Meehans consisted of their wives and three children, two boys and a girl; the former were the offspring of the younger brother, and the latter of Anthony. It has been observed, with truth and justice, that there is no man, how hardened and diabolical soever in his natural temper, who does not exhibit to some particular object a peculiar species of affection. Such a man was Anthony Meehan. That sullen hatred which he bore to human society, and that inherent depravity of heart which left the trail of vice and crime upon his footsteps, were flung off his character when he addressed his daughter Anne. To him her voice was like music; to her he was not the reckless villain, treacherous and cruel, which the helpless and unsuspecting found him; but a parent kind and indulgent as ever pressed an only and beloved daughter to his bosom. Anne was handsome: had she been born and educated in an elevated rank in society she would have been softened by the polish and luxury of life into perfect beauty; she was, however, utterly without education. As Anne experienced from her father no unnatural cruelty, no harshness, nor even indifference, she consequently loved him in return; for she knew that tenderness from *such* a man was a proof of parental love rarely to be found in life. Perhaps she loved not her father the less on perceiving

that he was proscribed by the world; a circumstance which might also have enhanced in his eyes the affection she bore him. When Meehan came to Carnmore she was sixteen; and, as that was three years before the incident occurred on which we have founded this narrative, the reader may now suppose her to be about nineteen; an interesting country girl as to person, but with a mind completely neglected, yet remarkable for an uncommon stock of good-nature and credulity.

About the hour of eleven o'clock one winter's night in the beginning of December, Meehan and his brother sat moodily at their hearth. The fire was of peat which had recently been put down, and from between the turf the ruddy blaze was shooting out in those little tongues and gusts of sober light which throw around the rural hearth one of those charms which make up the felicity of domestic life. The night was stormy, and the wind moaned and howled along the dark hills beneath which the cottage stood. Every object in the house was shrouded in a mellow shade, which afforded to the eye no clear outline, except around the hearth alone, where the light brightened into a golden hue, giving the idea of calmness and peace. Anthony Meehan sat on one side of it, and his daughter opposite him, knitting: before the fire sat Denis, drawing shapes in the ashes for his own amusement.

"Bless me," said he, "how sthrange it is!"

"What is?" inquired Anthony in his deep and grating tones.

"Why, thin, it *is* sthrange!" continued the other, who, despite of the severity of his brother, was remarkably superstitious—"a coffin I made in the ashes three times runnin' I Isn't it very quare, Anne?" he added, addressing the niece.

"Sthrange enough, of a sartinty," she replied, being unwilling to express before her father the alarm which the incident, slight as it was created in her mind; for she, like the uncle, was subject to such ridiculous influences. "How did it happen, uncle?"

"Why, thin, no way in life, Anne; only, as I was thryin' to make a shoe, it turned out a coffin on my hands. I thin smoothed the ashes, and began agin, an' sorra bit of it but was a coffin still. Well, says I, I'll give you another chance—here goes once more; an', as sure as a gun's iron, it was a coffin the third time! Heaven be about us, it's odd enough!"

"It would be little matther you were nailed down in a coffin," replied Anthony, fiercely; "the world would have little loss. What a pitiful, cowardly rascal you are! Afraid o' your own shadow afther the sun goes down, except *I'm* at your elbow! Can't you dhrive all them palavers out o' your head? Didn't the sargint tell us, an' prove to us, the time we broke the guard-house, an' took Frinch lave o' the ridgment for good, that the whole o' that, an' more along wid it, is all priestcraft?"

"I reminber he did, sure enough: I dunna where the same sargint is now, Tony? About no good, anyway, I'll be bail. Howsomever, in regard o' that, why doesn't yourself give up fastin' from the mate of a Friday?"

"Do you want me to sthretch you on the hearth?" replied the savage, whilst his eyes kindled into fury, and his grim visage darkened into a Satanic expression. "I'll tache you to be puttin' me through my catechiz about atin' mate. I may manage that as I plase; it comes at first cost, anyhow; but no cross-questions to me about it, if you regard your health!"

"I must say for you," replied Denis, reproachfully, "that you're a good warrant to put the health astray upon us of an odd start: we're not come to this time o' day widout carryin' somethin' to remimber you by. For my own part, Tony, I don't like such tokens; an' moreover, I wish you had resaved a thrifle o' larnin', espishily in the writin' line; for whenever we have any difference you're so ready to prove your opinion by settin' your mark upon me, that I'd rather, fifty times over, you could write it with pen an' ink."

"My father will give that up, uncle," said the niece; "it's bad for anybody to be fightin', but worst of all for brothers, that ought to live in peace and kindness. Won't you, father?"

"Maybe I will, dear, some o' these days, on your account, Anne; but you must get this creature of an uncle of yours to let me alone, an' not be aggravatin' me with his folly. As for your mother, she's worse; her tongue's sharp enough to skin a flint, and a batin' a day has little effect on her."

Anne sighed, for she knew how low an irreligious life, and the infamous society with which, as her father's wife, her mother was compelled to mingle, had degraded her.

"Well, but, father, you don't set her a good example yourself," said Anne; "and if she scoulds and drinks *now*, you know she was a different woman when you got her. You allow this yourself; and the crathur, the dhrunkest time she is, doesn't she cry bittherly, remimberin' what she *has* been. Instead of *one* batin' a day, father, thry *no* batin' a day, an' maybe it'll turn out betther than thumpin' an' smashin' her, as you do."

"Why, thin, there's thruth an' sinse in what the girl says, Tony," observed Denis.

"Come," replied Anthony, "whatever *she* may say, I'll suffer none of *your* interference. Go an' get us the black bottle from the *place;* it'll soon be time to move. I hope *they* won't stay too long."

Denis obeyed this command with great readiness, for whisky in some degree blunted the fierce passions of his brother, and deadened his cruelty; or, rather, diverted it from minor objects to those which occurred in the lawless perpetration of his villainy.

The bottle was got, and in the meantime the fire blazed up brightly; the storm without, however, did not abate, nor did Meehan and his brother wish that it should. As the elder of them took the glass from the hands of the other, an air of savage pleasure blazed in his eyes, on reflecting that the tempest of the night was favourable to the execution of the villainous deed on which they were bent.

"More power to you!" said Anthony, impiously personifying the storm: "sure that's *one* proof that God doesn't throuble his head

about what we do, or we would not get such a murtherin' fine night as is in it, anyhow. That's it ! blow an' tundher away, an' keep yourself an' us as black as hell, sooner than we should fail in what we intind ! Anne, your health, acushla !—Yours, Dinny ! If you keep your tongue off o' me, I'll neither make nor meddle in regard o' the batin' o' you."

"I hope you'll stick to that, anyhow," replied Denis ; "for my part I'm sick and sore o' you every day in the year. Many another man would put salt wather between himself and yourself, sooner nor become a batin'-stone for you, as I have been. Few would bear it when they could mend themselves."

"What's that you say ?" replied Anthony, suddenly laying down his glass, catching his brother by the collar, and looking him with a murderous scowl in the face. "Is it thrachery you hint at ?—eh ? Sarpent, is it thrachery you mane ?" and as he spoke he compressed Denis's neck between his powerful hands until the other was black in the face.

Anne flew to her uncle's assistance, and with much difficulty succeeded in rescuing him from the deadly gripe of her father, who exclaimed, as he loosed his hold, "You may thank the girl, or you'd not spake, nor dare to spake, about crossin' the salt-wather, or lavin' me in a desateful way agin. If I ever suspect that a thought of thrachery comes into your heart, I'll *do* for you ; and you may carry your story to the world I'll send you to."

"Father, dear, why are you so suspicious of my uncle ?" said Anne; "sure he's a long time livin' with you, an' goin' step for step in all the danger you meet with. If he had a mind to turn out a Judas agin you, he might a-done it long agone ; not to mintion the throuble it would bring on his own head, seein' he's as deep in everything as you are."

"If that's all that's throubling you," replied Denis, trembling, "you may make yourself asy on the head of it ; but well I know 'tisn't *that* that's on your mind. 'Tis your own conscience ; but sure it's not fair nor rasonable for you to vent your evil thoughts on me !"

"Well, he won't," said Anne, "he'll quit it ; his mind's throubled ; an', dear knows, it's no wondher it should. Och, I'd give the world wide that his conscience was lightened of the load that's upon it ! My mother's lameness is nothin' ; but the child, poor thing ! An' it was only widin three days of her lyin'-in. Och, it was a cruel sthroke, father ! An' when I seen its little innocent face, dead, an' me widout a brother, I thought my heart would break, thinkin' upon who did it !" The tears fell in showers from her eyes, as she added, "Father, I don't want to vex you ; but I wish you to feel sorry for *that* at laste. Oh, if you'd bring the priest, an' give up sich coorses, father dear, how happy we'd be, an' how happy yourself 'ud be !"

Conscience for a moment started from her sleep, and uttered a cry of guilt in his spirit : his face became ghastly, and his eyes full of horror ; his lips quivered, and he was about to upraid his daughter with more harshness than usual, when a low whistle, resembling that of a curlew, was heard at a chink of the door. In a moment he gulped down another glass of spirits, and was on his feet : "Go, Denis, an' get the arms," said his brother, "while I let them in."

On opening the door, three men entered, having their great coats muffled about them, and their hats slouched. One of them, named Kenny, was a short villain, but of a thick-set, hairy frame. The other was known as "the Big Mower," in consequence of his following that employment every season, and of his great skill in performing it. He had a deep-rooted objection against permitting the palm of his hand to be seen; a reluctance which common fame attributed to the fact of his having received on that part the impress of a hot iron, in the shape of the letter T, not forgetting to add that T was the hieroglyphic for Thief. The villain himself affirmed it was simply the mark of a cross, burned into it by a blessed friar, as a charm against St. Vitus's dance, to which he had been subject. The people, however, were rather sceptical, not of the friar's power to cure that malady, but of the fact of his ever having moved a limb under it; and they concluded with telling him, good-humouredly enough, that, notwithstanding the charm, he was destined to die "wid the threble of it in his toe." The third was a noted pedlar called Martin, who, under pretence of selling tape, pins, scissors, &c., was very useful in *setting* such premises as this virtuous fraternity might, without much risk, make a descent upon.

"I thought yees would out-stay your time," said the elder Meehan, relapsing into his determined hardihood of character; "we're ready, hours agone. Dick Rice gave me two curlew an' two patrich-calls to-day. Now pass the glass among yees, while Denny brings the arms. I know there's danger in this business, in regard of the Cassidys livin' so near us. If I see anybody afut, I'll use the *curlew* call; an' if not, I'll whistle twice on the *patrich*[1] one, an' yees may come an. The horse is worth aighty guineas if he's worth a shillin'; an' we'll make sixty of him ourselves."

For some time they chatted about the plan in contemplation, and drank freely of the spirits, until at length the impatience of the elder Meehan at the delay of his brother became ungovernable. His voice deepened into tones of savage passion as he uttered a series of blasphemous curses against this unfortunate butt of his indignation and malignity. At length he rushed out furiously to know why he did not return; but, on reaching a secret excavation in the mound against which the house was built, he found, to his utter dismay, that Denis had made his escape by an artificial passage, scooped out of it to secure themselves a retreat in case of surprise or detection. It opened behind the house among a clump of blackthorn and brushwood, and was covered with green turf in such a manner as to escape the notice of all who were not acquainted with the secret. Meehan's face, on his return, was worked up into an expression truly awful.

"We're sould!" said he; "but, stop, I'll tache the thraithur what revinge is!"

In a moment he awoke his brother's two sons, and dragged them by the neck, one in each hand, to the hearth.

[1] Partridge.

"Your villain of a father's off," said he, "to betray us: go an' folly him; bring him back, an' he'll be safe from me: but let him become a *stag* agin us, an' if I should hunt you both into the bowels of the airth, I'll send yees to a short account. I don't care that," and he snapped his fingers—"ha, ha—no, I don't care that for the law; I know how to dale with it when it comes! An' what's the stuff about the *ether* world but priestcraft and lies?"

"Maybe," said the Big Mower, "Denis is gone to get the foreway of us, an' to take the horse himself. Our best plan is to lose no time, at all events; so let us hurry, for fraid the night might happen to clear up."

"He!" said Meehan, "he go alone! No: the miserable wretch is afeard of his own shadow. I only wondher he stuck to me so long; but sure he wouldn't, only I bate the courage in, and the fear out of him. You're right, Brian," said he, upon reflection, "let us lose no time, but be off. Do yees mind?" he added to his nephews; "did yees hear me? If you see him, let him come back, an' all will be berrid; but if he doesn't you know your fate," saying which, he and his accomplices departed amid the howling of the storm.

The next morning Carnmore, and indeed the whole parish, was in an uproar; a horse, worth eighty guineas, had been stolen in the most daring manner from the Cassidys, and the hue-and-cry was up after the thief or thieves who took him. For several days the search was closely maintained, but without success: not the slightest trace could be found of him or them. The Cassidys could very well bear to lose him; but there were many struggling farmers, on whose property serious depredations had been committed, who could not sustain their loss so easily. It was natural, under these circumstances, that suspicion should attach to many persons, some of whom had but indifferent characters before, as well as to several who certainly had never deserved suspicion. When a fortnight or so had elapsed, and no circumstances transpired that might lead to discovery, the neighbours, including those who had principally suffered by the robberies, determined to assemble upon a certain day at Cassidy's house, for the purpose of clearing themselves, on oath, of the imputations thrown out against some of them as accomplices in the thefts. In order, however, that the ceremony should be performed as solemnly as possible, they determined to send for Father Farrell and Mr. Nicholson, a magistrate, both of whom they requested to undertake the task of jointly presiding upon this occasion; and, that the circumstance should have every publicity, it was announced from the altar by the priest on the preceding Sabbath, and published on the church-gate in large legible characters, ingeniously printed with a pen by the village schoolmaster.

In fact, the intended meeting, and the object of it, were already notorious; and much conversation was held upon its probable result, and the measures which might be taken against those who should refuse to swear. Of the latter description there was but one opinion, which was that their refusal in such a case would be tantamount to

guilt. The innocent were anxious to vindicate themselves from suspicion: and, as the suspected did not amount to more than a dozen, of course the whole body of the people, including the thieves themselves, who applauded it as loudly as the others, all expressed their satisfaction at the measures about to be adopted. A day was therefore appointed on which the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, particularly the suspected persons, should come to assemble at Cassidy's house, in order to have the characters of the innocent cleared up, and the guilty made known.

On the evening before this took place were assembled in Meehan's cottage the elder Meehan and the rest of the gang, including Denis, who had absconded on the night of the theft.

"Well, well, Denny," said Anthony, who forced his rugged nature into an appearance of better temper, that he might strengthen the timid spirit of his brother against the scrutiny about to take place on the morrow—perhaps, too, he dreaded him—"Well, well, Denny, I thought, sure enough, that it was some new piece of cowardice came over you. Just think of him," he added, "shabbin' off, only because he made, with a bit of a rod, three strokes in the ashes that he thought resembled a coffin!—ha, ha, ha!"

This produced a peal of derision at Denis's pusillanimous terror.

"Ay!" said the Big Mower, "he was makin' a coffin, was he? I wondher it wasn't a rope you drew, Denny. If any here dies in the coil, it will be the greatest coward, an' that's yourself."

"You may all laugh," replied Denis, "but I know such things to have a manin'. When my mother died, didn't my father, the heavens be his bed! see a black coach about a week before it? an' sure from the first day she tuck ill, the dead-watch was heard in the house every night: and what was more nor that, she kept *warm* until she went into her grave;[1] an', accordingly, didn't my sisther Shibby die within a year afther?"

"It's no matther about thim things," replied Anthony; "it's thruth about the dead-watch, my mother keepin' warm, an' Shibby's death, anyway. But on the night we tuck Cassidy's horse I thought you were goin' to betray us: I was surely in a murdherin' passion, an' would have done harm, only things turned out as they did."

"Why," said Denis, "the thruth is, I was afeard *some* of us would be shot, an' that the lot would fall on myself; for the coffin, thinks I, was sent as a warnin'. How-and-ever, I spied about Cassidy's stable till I seen that the coast was clear; so whin I heard the low cry of the patrich that Anthony and I agreed on, I joined yees."

"Well, about to-morrow," observed Kenny—"ha, ha, ha!—there'll be lots o' swearin'. Why, the whole parish is to switch the primer, many a thumb and coat-cuff will be kissed in spite of priest or magistrate. I remimber once, whin I was swearin' an *alibi* for long Paddy Murray, that suffered for the M'Gees, I kissed my thumb, I thought,

[1] It is supposed in Ireland, when a corpse retains, for a longer space of time than usual, anything like animal heat, that some person belonging to the family of the deceased will die within a year.

so smoothly that no one would notish it ; but I had a keen one to dale with, so says he, 'You know, for the matther o' that, my good fellow, that you have your *thumb* to kiss every day in the week,' says he, 'but you might salute the *book* out o' dacency and good manners ; not,' says he, 'that you an' it are strangers aither ; for, if I don't mistake, you're an ould hand at swearin' alibis.' At all evints, I had to smack the book itself, and it's I, and Barney Green, and Tim Casserly, that did swear stiffly for Paddy, but the thing was too clear agin him. So he suffered, poor fellow, an' died right game, for he said over his *dhrop*—ha, ha, ha !—that he was as innocent o' the murder as a child unborn ; an' so he was in *one* sinse, bein' afther gettin' absolution."

"As to thumb-kissin'," observed the elder Meehan, "let there be none of it among us to-morrow ; if we're caught at it 'twould be as bad as stayin' away altogether ; for my part, I'll give it a smack like a pistol shot—ha, ha, ha !"

"I hope they won't bring the priest's book," said Denis. "I haven't the laste objection agin payin' my respects to the *magistrate's* paper, but somehow I don't like tastin' the *priest's* in a falsity."

"Don't you know," said the Big Mower, "that whin a magistrate's present, it's ever an' always only the Tistament *by law* that's used. I myself wouldn't kiss the mass-book in a falsity."

"There's none of us sayin' we'd do it in a lie," said the elder Meehan ; "an' it's well for thousands that the law doesn't use the priest's book ; though, afther all, aren't there books that say religion's all a sham ? I think myself it is ; for if what they talk about justice an' Providence is thrue, would Tom Dillon be transported for the robbery *we* committed at Bantry ? Tom, it's true, was an ould offender ; but he was innocent of *that*, anyway. The world's all chance, boys, as Sargint Eustace used to say, and whin we die there's no more about us ; so that I don't see why a man mightn't as well *switch* the priest's book as any other, only that, somehow, a body can't shake the terror of it off o' them."

"I dunna, Anthony, but you an' I ought to curse that sargint ; only for him we mightn't be as we are, sore in our conscience, an' afeard of every fut we hear passin'," observed Denis.

"Spake for your own cowardly heart, man alive," replied Anthony ; "for my part, I'm afeard o' nothin'. Put round the glass, and don't be nursin' it there all night. Sure we're not so bad as the rot among the sheep, nor the black leg among the bullocks, nor the staggers among the horses, anyhow ; an' yet they'd hang us up only for bein' fond of a bit o' mate—ha, ha, ha !"

"Thrue enough," said the Big Mower, philosophising. "God made the beef and the mutton, and the grass to feed it ; but it was man made the ditches ; now we're only bringin' things back to the right way that Providence made them in, when ould times were in it, manin' before ditches war invinted—ha, ha, ha !"

"'Tis a good argument," observed Kenny, "only that judge and jury would be a little delicate in actin' up to it ; an' the more's the pity

Howsomever, as Providence made the mutton, sure it's no harm for us to take what he sends."

"Ay; but," said Denis—

"God made man, an' man made money;
God made bees, an' bees made honey;
God made Satan, an' Satan made sin;
An' God made a hell to put Satan in.

Let nobody say there's not a hell; isn't there it plain from Scripthur?"

"I wish you had Scripthur tied about your neck!" replied Anthony. "How fond of it one o' the greatest thieves that ever missed the rope is! Why the fellow could plan a roguery with any man that ever danced the hangman's hornpipe, an' yit he be's repatin' bits an' scraps of ould prayers, an' charms, an' stuff. Ay, indeed! Sure he has a varse out o' the Bible that he thinks can prevint a man from bein' hung up any day!"

While Denny, the Big Mower, and the two Meehans were thus engaged in giving expression to their peculiar opinions, the pedlar held a conversation of a different kind with Anne.

With the secrets of the family in his keeping, he commenced a rather penitent review of his own life, and expressed his intention of abandoning so dangerous a mode of accumulating wealth. He said he thanked heaven that he had already laid up sufficient for the wants of a reasonable man; that he understood farming and the management of *sheep* particularly well: that it was his intention to remove to a different part of the kingdom, and take a farm; and that nothing prevented him from having done this before but the want of a helpmate to take care of his establishment. He added that his present wife was of an intolerable temper, and a greater villain by fifty degrees than himself. He concluded by saying that his conscience twitched him night and day for living with her, and that, by abandoning her immediately, becoming truly religious, and taking Anne in her place, he hoped, he said, to atone in some measure for his few errors.

Anthony, however, having noticed the earnestness which marked the pedlar's manner, suspected him of attempting to corrupt the principles of his daughter, having forgotten the influence which his own opinions were calculated to produce upon her heart.

"Martin," said he, "'twould be as well you ped attintion to what we're sayin' in regard o' the trial to-morrow, as to be palaverin' talk into the girl's ear that can't be good comin' from *your* lips. Quit it, I say, quit it! *Corp an duowol*—I won't allow such proceedings!"

"Swear till you blister your lips, Anthony," replied Martin: "as for me, bein' no residenthur, I'm not bound to it; an' what's more, I'm not suspected. 'Tis settin' some other bit o' work for yees I'll be, while you're all clearin' yourselves from stealin' honest Cassidy's horse. I wish we had him safely disposed of in the manetime, an' the money for him an' the other beasts in our pockets."

Much more conversation of a similar kind passed between them upon various topics connected with their profligacy and crimes. At

length they separated for the night, after having concerted their plan of action for the ensuing scrutiny.

The next morning, before the hour appointed arrived, the parish, particularly the neighbourhood of Carnmore, was struck with deep consternation. Labour became suspended, mirth disappeared, and every face was marked with paleness, anxiety, and apprehension. If two men met, one shook his head mysteriously, and inquired from the other, "Did you hear the news?"

"Ay! ay! the Lord be about us all! I did: an' I pray God it may lave the counthry as it came to it!"

"Oh, an' that it may, I humbly make supplication this day!"

If two women met, it was with similar mystery and fear. "*Vread*, do you know what's at the Cassidys'?"

"Whisht, a-hagur! I do; but let what wil happen, sure it's best for us to say nothin'."

"Say! the blessed Virgin forbid! I'd cut my hand off o' me, afore I'd spake a word about it; only that ——"

"Whisht woman!—for mercy's sake—don't ——"

And so they would separate, each crossing herself devoutly.

The meeting at Cassidy's was to take place that day at twelve o'clock; but, about two hours before the appointed time, Anne, who had been in some of the other houses, came into her father's, quite pale, breathless and trembling.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, with clasped hands, whilst the tears fell fast from her eyes, "we'll be lost, ruined; did yees hear what's in the neighbourhood wid the Cassidys?"

"Girl," said the father, with more severity than he had ever manifested to her before, "I never yit *ris* my hand to you, but, *mi corp an duowol*, if you open your lips, I'll *fell* you where you stand. Do you want that cowardly uncle o' yours to be the manes o' hangin' your father? Maybe that was one o' the lessons Martin gave you last night?" And as he spoke he knit his brows at her with that murderous scowl which was habitual to him. The girl trembled, and began to think that, since her father's temper deepened in domestic outrage and violence as his crimes multiplied, the sooner she left the family the better. Every day, indeed, diminished that species of instinctive affection which she had entertained towards him; and this in proportion as her reason ripened into a capacity for comprehending the dark materials of which his character was composed. Whether he himself began to consider detection at hand or not, we cannot say; but it is certain that his conduct was marked with a callous recklessness of spirit, which increased in atrocity to such a degree that even his daughter could only *not* look at him with *disgust*.

"What's the matter now?" inquired Denis, with alarm: "is it anything about us, Anthony?"

"No, 'tisn't," replied the other, "anything about us! What ud it be about us for? 'Tis a lyin' report that some cunnin' knave spread, hopin' to find out the guilty. But hear me, Denis, once for all; we're going to clear ourselves—now listen—an' let my words sink deep into

your heart: if you refuse to swear this day—no matther *what's* put into your hand—you'll do harm—that's all: have courage, man; but should you *cow*, your coorse will be short; an' mark, even if *you* escape me, your sons won't. I have it all planned; an' *corp an duowol!* thim you won't know from Adam will revinge me if I'm taken up through your unmanliness."

"'Twould be betther for us to lave the counthry," said Anne. "We might slip away as it is."

"Ay," said the father, "an' be taken by the neck afore we'd get two miles from the place! No, no, girsha; it's the safest way to brazen thim out. Did you hear me, Denis?"

Denis started, for he had been evidently pondering on the mysterious words of Anne, to which his brother's anxiety to conceal them gave additional mystery. The coffin, too, recurred to him; and he feared that the death shadowed out by it would in some manner or other occur in the family. He was, in fact, one of those miserable villains with but half a conscience—that is to say, as much as makes them the slaves of the fear which results from crime, without being the slightest impediment to their committing it. It was no wonder he started at the deep, pervading, tones of his brother's voice, for the question was put with ferocious energy.

On starting, he looked with vague terror on his brother, fearing, but not comprehending, his question.

"What is it, Anthony?" he inquired.

"Oh, for that matther," replied the other, "nothin' at all: think of what I said to you, anyhow; swear through thick an' thin, if you have a regard for your own health, or for your childher. Maybe I had betther repate it agin for you," he continued, eying him with mingled hatred and suspicion. "Denis, as a friend, I bid you mind yourself this day, an' see you don't bring aither of us into throuble."

There lay before the Cassidys' houses a small flat of common, trodden into rings by the young horses they were in the habit of training. On this level space were assembled those who came, either to clear their own character from suspicion, or to witness the ceremony. The day was dark and lowering, and heavy clouds rolled slowly across the peaks of the surrounding mountains; scarcely a breath of air could be felt; and, as the country people silently approached, such was the closeness of the day, their haste to arrive in time, and their general anxiety, either for themselves or their friends, that almost every man, on reaching the spot, might be seen taking up the skirts of his "cothamore," or "big coat" (the peasant's handkerchief), to wipe the sweat from his brow; and as he took off his dingy woollen hat, or caubeen, the perspiration rose in strong exhalations from his head.

"Michael, am I in time?" might be heard from such persons, as they arrived. "Did this business begin yit?"

"Full time, Larry; myself's here an hour ago, but no appearance of anything as yit. Father Farrell an' Squire Nicholson are both in Cassidy's, waitin' till they're all *gother*, whin they'll begin to put thim through their facin's. You hard about what they've got?"

"No; for I'm only on my way home from the berril of a *cleaveen* of mine, that we put down this mornin' in Tullyard. What is it?"

"Why, man alive, it's through the whole parish *inready!*" He then went on, lowering his voice to a whisper, and speaking in a tone bordering on dismay.

The other crossed himself, and betrayed symptoms of awe and astonishment, not unmingled with fear.

"Well," he replied, "I dunna whether I'd come here if I'd known that; for, innocent or guilty, I wouldn't wish to be near it. Och, may God pity thim that's to come acrass it, espishly if they dare to do it in a lie!"

"They needn't, I can tell yees both," observed a third person, "be a hair afeard of it, for the best rason livin', that there's no thruth at all in the report, nor the Cassidys never thought of sindin' for anything o' the kind. I have it from Larry Cassidy's own lips, an' he ought to know best."

The truth is that two reports were current among the crowd: one that the oath was to be simply on the Bible; and the other that a more awful means of expurgation was to be resorted to by the Cassidys. The people, consequently, not knowing which to credit, felt the most painful of all sensations—uncertainty.

During the period which intervened between their assembling and the commencement of the ceremony, a spectator, interested in contemplating the workings of human nature in circumstances of deep interest, would have had ample scope for observation. The occasion was to them a solemn one. There was little conversation among them; for when a man is wound up to a pitch of great interest, he is seldom disposed to relish discourse. Every brow was anxious, every cheek blanched, and every arm folded: they scarcely stirred, or when they did, only with slow, abstracted movements, rather mechanical than voluntary. If an individual made his appearance about Cassidy's door a sluggish stir among them was visible, and a low murmur of a peculiar character might be heard; but on perceiving that it was only some ordinary person, all subsided again into a brooding stillness that was equally singular and impressive.

Under this peculiar feeling was the multitude when Meehan and his brother were seen approaching it from their own house. The elder, with folded arms, and hat pulled over his brows, stalked grimly forward, having that remarkable scowl upon his face which had contributed to establish for him so diabolical a character. Denis walked by his side with his countenance strained to inflation—a miserable parody of that sullen effrontery which marked the unshrinking miscreant beside him. He had not heard of the ordeal, owing to the caution of Anthony; but, notwithstanding his effort at indifference, a keen eye might have observed the latent anxiety of a man who was habitually villainous and naturally timid.

When this pair entered the crowd, a few secret glances, too rapid to be noticed by the people, passed between them and their accomplices. Denis, on seeing them present, took fresh courage, and looked with the

heroism of a blusterer upon those who stood about him, especially whenever he found himself under the scrutinizing eye of his brother. Such was the horror and detestation in which they were held, that on advancing into the assembly the persons on each side turned away and openly avoided them : eyes full of fierce hatred were bent on them vindictively, and "curses, not loud, but deep," were muttered with an indignation which nothing but a divided state of feeling could repress within due limits. Every glance, however, was paid back by Anthony with interest from eyes and black shaggy brows tremendously ferocious ; and his curses, as they rolled up half smothered from his huge chest, were deeper and more diabolical by far than their own. He even jeered at them ; but, however disgusting his frown, there was something truly appalling in the dark gleam of his scoff, which threw them at an immeasurable distance behind him in the power of displaying on the countenance the worst of human passions.

At length Mr. Nicholson, Father Farrell, and his curate, attended by the Cassidys and their friends, issued from the house ; two or three servants preceded them, bearing a table and chairs for the magistrate and priests, who, however, stood during the ceremony. When they entered one of the rings before alluded to, the table and chairs were placed in the centre of it, and Father Farrell, as possessing most influence over the people, addressed them very impressively.

"There are," said he, in conclusion, "persons in this crowd whom we know to be guilty ; but we will have an opportunity of now witnessing the lengths to which crime, long indulged in, can carry them. To such people I would say, *beware!* for they know not the situation in which they are placed."

During all this time there was not the slightest allusion made to the mysterious ordeal which had excited so much awe and apprehension among them—a circumstance which occasioned many a pale, downcast face to clear up, and reassume its usual cheerful expression. The crowd now were assembled around the ring, and every man on whom an imputation had been fastened came forward, when called upon, to the table at which the priests and magistrate stood uncovered. The form of the oath was framed by the two clergymen, who, as they knew the reservations and evasions commonest among such characters, had ingeniously contrived not to leave a single loophole through which the consciences of those who belonged to this worthy fraternity might escape.

To those acquainted with Irish courts of justice there was nothing particularly remarkable in the swearing. Indeed, one who stood among the crowd might hear from those who were stationed at the greatest distance from the table such questions as the following:—

"Is the *thing* in it, Art?"

"No ; 'tis nothin' but the *law* Bible, the magistrate's own one."

To this the querist would reply, with a satisfied nod of the head, "Oh, is that all? I heard they war to have *it*," on which he would push himself through the crowd until he reached the table, where he took his oath as readily as another.

"Jem Hartigan," said the magistrate to one of those persons, "are *you* to swear?"

"Faix, myself doesn't know, your honour; only that I hard them say that the Cassidys mintioned our names along wid many other honest people; an' one wouldn't, in that case, lie under a false report, your honour, from anyone, when we're as clear as them that never saw the light of anything of the kind."

The magistrate then put the book into his hand, and Jem, in return, fixed his eye, with much apparent innocence, on his face. "Now, Jem Hartigan," &c. &c., and the oath was accordingly administered. Jem put the book to his mouth, with his thumb raised to an acute angle on the back of it; nor was the smack by any means a silent one which he gave it (his thumb).

The magistrate set his ear with the air of a man who had experience in discriminating such sounds. "Hartigan," said he, "you'll condescend to kiss the *book*, sir, if you please: there's a hollowness in that smack, my good fellow, that can't escape *me*."

"Not kiss it, your honour? why, by this staff in my hand, if ever a man kissed ——"

"Silence, you impostor," said the curate; "I watched you closely, and am confident your lips never touched the book."

"My lips *never* touched the book! Why, you know I'd be sarry to conthradict either o' yees; but I was jist goin' to observe, wid simmission, that my own lips ought to know best; an' don't you hear them tellin' you that they *did* kiss it?" and he grinned with confidence in their faces.

"You double-dealing reprobate," said the parish priest, "I'll lay my whip across your jaws. I saw you, too, an' you did *not* kiss the book."

"By dad, an' maybe I did *not*, sure enough," he replied. "Any man may make a mistake unknownst to himself; but I'd give my oath, an' be the five crasses, I kissed it as sure as——however, a good thing's never the worse o' bein' twice done, gintlemen; so here goes, jist to satisfy yees," and, placing the book near his mouth, and altering his position a little, he appeared to comply, though, on the contrary, he touched neither it nor his thumb. "It's the same thing to me," he continued, laying down the book with an air of confident assurance, "it's the same thing to me if I kissed it fifty times over, which I'm ready to do if *that* doesn't satisfy yees."

As every man acquitted himself of the charges brought against him, the curate immediately took down his name. Indeed, before the "clearing" commenced, he requested that such as were to swear would stand together within the ring, that, after having sworn, he might hand each of them a certificate of the fact, which they appeared to think might be serviceable to them, should they happen to be subsequently indicted for the same crime in a court of justice. This, however, was only a plan to keep them together for what was soon to take place.

The detections of thumb-kissing were received by those who had already sworn, and by several in the outward crowd, with much mirth.

It is but justice, however, to many of those assembled, to state that they appeared to entertain a serious opinion of the nature of the ceremony, and no small degree of abhorrence against those who seemed to trifle with the solemnity of an oath.

Standing on the edge of the circle, in the innermost row, were Meehan and his brother. The former eyed, with all the hardness of a stoic, the successive individuals, as they passed up to the table. His accomplices had gone forward, and, to the surprise of many who strongly suspected them, in the most indifferent manner "cleared" themselves, in the trying words of the oath, of all knowledge of and participation in the thefts that had taken place.

The grim visage of the elder Meehan was marked by a dark smile, scarcely perceptible; but his brother, whose nerves were not so firm, appeared somewhat confused and distracted by the imperturbable villainy of the perjurers.

At length they were called up. Anthony advanced slowly, but collectedly, to the table, only turning his eye slightly about to observe if his brother accompanied him. "Denis," said he, "which of us will swear first? You may;" for as he doubted his brother's firmness, he was prudent enough, should he fail, to guard against having the sin of perjury to answer for, along with those demands which his country had to make for his other crimes. Denis took the book, and cast a slight glance at his brother, as if for encouragement; their eyes met, and the darkened brow of Anthony hinted at the danger of flinching in this crisis. The tremor of his hand was not, perhaps, visible to any but Anthony, who, however, did not overlook this circumstance. He held the book, but raised not his eye to meet the looks of either the magistrate or the priests; the colour also left his face, as with shrinking lips he touched the Word of God in deliberate falsehood. Having then laid it down, Anthony received it with a firm grasp, and whilst his eye turned boldly in contemptuous mockery upon those who presented it, he impressed it with the kiss of a man whose depraved conscience seemed to goad him only to evil. After "clearing" himself he laid the Bible upon the table with the affected air of a person who felt hurt at the imputation of theft, and joined the rest with a frown upon his countenance and a smothered curse upon his lips.

Just at this moment a person from Cassidy's house laid upon the table a small box covered with black cloth; and our readers will be surprised to hear that, if fire had come down visibly from heaven, greater awe and fear could not have been struck into their hearts or depicted upon their countenances. The casual conversation, and the commentaries upon the ceremony they had witnessed, instantly settled into a most profound silence, and every eye was turned towards it with an interest absolutely fearful.

"Let," said the curate, "none of those who have sworn depart from within the ring until they *once more* clear themselves upon this," and as he spoke, he held it up. "Behold!" said he, "and tremble—behold THE DONAGH!!!"

A low murmur of awe and astonishment burst from the people

in general, whilst those within the ring, who, with few exceptions, were the worst characters in the parish, appeared ready to sink into the earth. Their countenances, for the most part, paled into the condemned hue of guilt; many of them became almost unable to stand; and, altogether, the state of trepidation and terror in which they stood was strikingly wild and extraordinary.

The curate proceeded: "Let him now who is guilty depart; or, if he wishes, advance, and challenge the awful penalty annexed to perjury upon THIS! Who has ever been known to swear falsely upon the Donagh without being visited by a tremendous punishment, either on the spot, or in twenty-four hours after his perjury? If we ourselves have not seen such instances with our own eyes, it is because none liveth who dare incur such a dreadful penalty; but we have heard of those who did, and of their awful punishment afterwards. Sudden death, madness, paralysis, self-destruction, or the murder of someone dear to them, are the marks by which perjury on the Donagh is known and visited. Advance now, ye who are innocent, but let the guilty withdraw; for we do not desire to witness the terrible vengeance which would attend a false oath upon the DONAGH. Pause, therefore, and be cautious! for if this grievous sin be committed, a heavy punishment will fall, not only upon you, but upon the parish in which it occurs!"

The words of the priest sounded to the guilty like the death-sentence of a judge. Before he had concluded, all, except Meehan and his brother and a few who were really innocent, had slunk back out of the circle into the crowd. Denis, however, became pale as a corpse; and from time to time wiped the large drops from his haggard brow. Even Anthony's cheek, despite of his natural callousness, was less red; his eyes became disturbed; but by their influence he contrived to keep Denis in sufficient dread to prevent him from mingling, like the rest, among the people. The few who remained along with them advanced, and, notwithstanding their innocence, when the Donagh was presented, and the figure of Christ and the Twelve Apostles displayed in the solemn tracery of its rude carving, they exhibited symptoms of fear. With trembling hands they touched the Donagh, and with trembling lips kissed the crucifix, in attestation of their guiltlessness of the charge, of which they had been accused.

"Anthony and Denis Meehan, come forward," said the curate, "and declare your innocence of the crimes with which you are charged by the Cassidys and others."

Anthony advanced; but Denis stood rooted to the ground; on perceiving which the former sternly returned a step or two, and catching him by the arm with an admonitory grip that could not easily be misunderstood, compelled him to proceed with himself step by step to the table. Denis, however, could feel the strong man tremble, and perceive that although he strove to lash himself into the energy of despair, and the utter disbelief of all religious sanction, yet the trial before him called every slumbering prejudice and apprehension of his mind into active power. This was a death-blow to his own resolution,

or, rather, it confirmed him in his previous determination not to swear on the Donagh, except to acknowledge his guilt, which he could scarcely prevent himself from doing, such was the vacillating state of mind to which he felt himself reduced.

When Anthony reached the table his huge form seemed to dilate by his effort at maintaining the firmness necessary to support him in this awful struggle between conscience and superstition on the one hand, and guilt, habit, and infidelity on the other. He fixed his deep, dilated eyes upon the Donagh in a manner that betokened somewhat of irresolution: his countenance fell; his colour came and went, but eventually settled in a flushed red; his powerful hands and arms trembled so much that he folded them to prevent his agitation from being noticed: the grimness of his face ceased to be stern, while it retained the blank expression of guilt; his temples swelled out with the terrible play of their blood vessels; his chest, too, heaved up and down with the united pressure of guilt and the tempest which shook him within. At length he saw Denis's eye upon him, and his passions took a new direction; he knit his brows at him with more than usual fierceness, ground his teeth, and with a step and action of suppressed fury he placed his foot at the edge of the table, and bowing down under the eye of God and man, took the awful oath on the mysterious Donagh in a falsehood! When it was finished a feeble groan broke from his brother's lips. Anthony bent his eye on him with a deadly glare; but Denis saw it not. The shock was beyond his courage—he had become insensible.

Those who stood at the outskirts of the crowd, seeing Denis apparently lifeless, thought he must have sworn falsely on the Donagh, and exclaimed, "He's dead! Gracious God! Denis Meehan's struck dead by the Donagh! He swore in a lie, and is now a corpse!" Anthony paused, and calmly surveyed him as he lay with his head resting upon the hands of those who supported him. At this moment a silent breeze came over where they stood; and as the Donagh lay upon the table, the black ribbons with which it was ornamented fluttered with a melancholy appearance that deepened the sensations of the people into something peculiarly solemn and preternatural. Denis at length revived; and stared wildly and vacantly about him. When composed sufficiently to distinguish and recognise individual objects, he looked upon the gloomy visage and threatening eye of his brother, and shrunk back with a terror almost epileptical. "Oh!" he exclaimed, "save me! save me from that man, and I'll discover all!"

Anthony calmly folded one arm into his bosom, and his lip quivered with the united influence of hatred and despair.

"Hould him!" shrieked a voice, which proceeded from his daughter, "hould my father, or he'll murdher him! Oh! oh! merciful heaven!"

Ere the words were uttered she had made an attempt to clasp the arms of her parent, whose motions she understood; but only in time to receive from the pistol, which he had concealed in his breast, the bullet aimed at her uncle! She tottered; and the blood spouted out

of her neck upon her father's brows, who hastily put up his hand and wiped it away, for it had actually blinded him.

The elder Meehan was a tall man, and as he stood, elevated nearly a head above the crowd, his grim brows red with his daughter's blood —which, in attempting to wipe away, he had deeply streaked across his face—his eyes shooting fiery gleams of his late resentment, mingled with the wildness of unexpected horror—as he thus stood, it would be impossible to contemplate a more revolting picture of that state to which the principles that had regulated his life must ultimately lead, even in this world.

On perceiving what he had done, the deep working of his powerful frame was struck into sudden stillness, and he turned his eyes on his bleeding daughter with a fearful perception of her situation. Now was the harvest of his creed and crimes reaped in blood; and he felt that the stroke which had fallen upon him was one of those by which God will sometimes bare his arm and vindicate his justice. The reflection, however, shook him not: the reality of his misery was too intense and pervading, and grappled too strongly with his hardened and unbending spirit to waste its power upon a nerve or a muscle. It was abstracted, and beyond the reach of bodily suffering. From the moment his daughter fell he moved not: his lips were half open with the conviction produced by the blasting truth of her death, effected prematurely by his own hand.

Those parts of his face which had not been stained with her blood assumed an ashy paleness, and rendered his countenance more terrific by the contrast. Tall, powerful, and motionless, he appeared to the crowd, glaring at the girl, like a tiger anxious to join his offspring, yet stunned with the shock of the bullet which has touched a vital part. His iron-grey hair, as it fell in thick masses about his neck, was moved slightly by the blast, and a lock which fell over his temple was blown back with a motion rendered more distinct by his statue-like attitude, immovable as death.

A silent and awful gathering of the people around this impressive scene intimated their knowledge of what they considered to be a judicial punishment annexed to perjury upon the Donagh. This relic lay on the table, and the eyes of those who stood within view of it, turned from Anthony's countenance to it, and again back to his blood-stained visage, with all the overwhelming influence of superstitious fear. Shudderings, tremblings, crossings, and ejaculations marked their conduct and feeling; for though the incident in itself was simply a fatal and uncommon one, yet *they* considered it supernatural and miraculous.

At length a loud and agonizing cry burst from the lips of Meehan—"Oh, God!—God of heaven an' earth!—have I murdhered my daughter?" and he cast down the fatal weapon with a force which buried it some inches into the wet clay.

The crowd had closed upon Anne; but, with the strength of a giant he flung them aside, caught the girl in his arms, and pressed her bleeding to his bosom. He gasped for breath. "Anne," said he,

"Anne, I am without hope, an' there's none to forgive me except you —none at all: from God, to the poorest of his creatures, I am hated an' cursed by all except you! Don't curse me, Anne; don't curse me. Oh, isn't it enough, darlin', that my sowl is now stained with your blood, along with my other crimes? Oh, think, darlin', of my broken heart! In hell, on earth, an' in heaven, there's none to forgive your father but yourself!—NONE! NONE! Oh, what's comin' over me! I'm dizzy an' shiverin'! How cowld the day's got of a sudden! Hould up, *avourneen machree!* I *was* a bad man; but to *you*, Anne, I was *not* as I was to everyone! Darlin', oh, look at me with forgiveness in your eye, or, anyway, don't *curse* me! Oh! I'm far cowlder now! Tell me that you forgive me, *acushla oge machree!—Manim asthee hu*,[1] darlin', say it. I DARN'T LOOK TO GOD! but oh! do *you* say the forgivin' word to your father before you die!"

"Father," said she, "I deserve this—it's only just. I had plotted with that divilish Martin to betray them all, except yourself, an' to get the reward; an' then we intended to go—an'—live at a distance —an' in wickedness—where we—might not be known—he's at our house—let him be—secured. Forgive me, father; you said so often that there was no thruth in religion—that I began to—think so. Oh!—God! have mercy upon me!" And with these words she expired.

Meehan's countenance, on hearing this, was overspread with a ghastly look of the most desolating agony; he staggered back, and the body of his daughter, which he strove to hold, would have fallen from his arms, had it not been caught by the bystanders. His eye sought out his brother, but not in resentment. "Oh! she died, but didn't say, 'I FORGIVE YOU!' Denis, bring me home—I'm sick—very sick—oh, but it's cowld—everything's reeling—cowld—cowld it is!"—and as he uttered the last words he shuddered, fell down in a fit of apoplexy, never to rise again; and the bodies of his daughter and himself were both waked and buried together.

The result is brief. The rest of the gang were secured; Denis became approver, by whose evidence they suffered that punishment decreed by law to the crimes of which they had been guilty. The two events which we have just related of course added to the supernatural fear and reverence previously entertained for this terrible relic. It is still used as an ordeal of expurgation in cases of stolen property; and we are not wrong in asserting that many of those misguided creatures, who too frequently hesitate not to swear falsely on the word of God, would suffer death itself sooner than commit a perjury on the Donagh.

The story of the Donagh, the Author has reason to believe, was the means of first bringing this curious piece of antiquity into notice. There is little to be added here to what is in the sketch concerning its influence over the people, and the use of it as a blessed relic, sought for by those who wished to apply a certain test of guilt or innocence to such well-known thieves as scrupled not to perjure themselves on the

[1] Young pulse of my heart! my soul is within thee.

Bible. For this purpose it was a perfect conscience-trap, the most hardened miscreant never having been known to risk a false oath upon it. Many singular anecdotes are related concerning it.

The Author feels great pleasure in subjoining two very interesting letters upon the subject—one from an accomplished scholar, the Rev. Dr. O'Beirne, master of the distinguished school of Portora at Enniskillen; the other from Sir William Betham, one of the soundest and most learned of our Irish antiquaries. Both gentlemen differ in their opinion respecting the antiquity of the Donagh; and, as the Author is incompetent to decide between them, he gives their respective letters to the public.

"Stradbrook House, *October*, 1832.

"DEAR SIR,—I have read Dr. O'Beirne's important letter on the Dona: the account he has collected of its recent history is full of interest, and for the most part, I have no doubt, correct. His speculations respecting its antiquity I cannot give my adhesion to not feeling a doubt myself on the subject. When I have time to investigate it fully, I am satisfied that this box, like the others, of which accounts have already been published, will be found mentioned in the Irish Annals. The inscriptions, however, fully identify the MS. and the box, and show that antiquaries, from the execution of the workmanship and figures on these interesting reliques, often underrate their antiquity—a fault which the world are little inclined to give them credit for, and which they fall into from an anxiety to err on what they consider the side which is least likely to produce the smile of contempt or the sneer of incredulity, forgetting that it is the sole business of an antiquarian and historian to speak the truth, disregarding even contempt for so doing.

"I had been somewhat lengthy in my description of the Dona, and, from habit, entered into a minute account of all its parts, quite forgetting that you, perhaps, do not possess an appetite for antiquarian detail, and therefore might be better pleased to have a general outline than such a recital. I therefore proceed to give it as briefly as possible, not, however omitting any material points.

"The Irish word Domnach, which is pronounced *Dona*, means the Lord's day, or the first day in the week, sanctified or consecrated to the service of the Lord. It is also in that sense used for a house, church, or chapel. *Donagh more* means the great church or chapel dedicated to God. This box, being holy, as containing the Gospels, and having the crucifix thereon, was dedicated or consecrated to the service of God. Like the Caah, the Meeshach, and Dhimma's box, it is of brass, covered with plates of silver, and resembles the two former in having a box of yew inside, which was the original case of the MS., and became venerated so much, on that account, as to be deemed worthy of being inclosed with it in the shrine made by permission of John O'Carberry, Abbot of Clonmacnois in the 14th century.

"The top of the Dona is divided by a cross, on the lower arm of which is a figure of the Saviour; over his head is a shield, divided *per pale*, between two crystal settings; on the dexter is a hand holding a scourge or whip of three thongs, and on a chief a ring; on the sinister, on a chief, the same charge and three crucifixion nails. In the first compartment or quarter of the cross are representations of St. Columbkill, St. Bridget, and St. Patrick. In the second, a bishop pierced with two arrows, and two figures of St. Peter and St. Paul. In the third, the archangel Michael treading on the dragon, and the Virgin Mary and the infant Jesus. In the fourth, St. Tigernach handing to his successor, St. Sinellus, the Dona; and a female figure, perhaps Mary Magdalen.

"The front of the Dona is ornamented with three crystal settings, surmounted by grotesque figures of animals. Between these are four horsemen with swords drawn, in full speed.

"The right hand end has a figure of St. Tigernach and St. John the Baptist. The left hand end a figure of St. Catherine with her wheel.

"The Dona is nine inches and a half long, seven wide, and not quite four thick.

"So far I have been enabled to describe the Dona from the evidently accurate and well-executed drawing you were so good as to present to me. Why the

description is less particular than it should have been, I shall take another opportunity of explaining to you."

"There are three inscriptions on the Dona: one on a scroll from the hand of the figure of the Baptist, of ECCE AGNUS DEI. The two others are on plates of silver, but their exact position on the box is not marked in the drawing, but may be guessed by certain places which the plates exactly fit.

"The first is—

'JOHANNES: OBARRDAN: FABRICAVIT.

"The second—

"JOHS: OKARBRI: COMORBANVS: S. TIGNACH: PMISIT.

"i. e.:—

"'*John O Barrdan made this box by the permission of John O Carbry, successor of St. Tigernach.*'

"St. Tierney, or St. Tigernach, was third B'shop of Clogher, having succeeded St. Maccartin in the year 506. In the list of bishops, St. Patrick is reckoned the first, and founder of the see. Tigernach died the 4th of April, 548.

"John O'Carbry was abbot of Clones, or Clounish, in the County of Monaghan, and as such was *comorb*, or *corb*[1]—i. e., successor—of Tigernach, who was founder of the abbey, and removed the episcopal seat from Cloger to Clounish. Many of the abbots were also bishops of the see. He died in 1353 How long he was abbot does not appear; but the age of the outside covering of the Dona is fixed to the 14th century.

"Since the foregoing was written I have seen the Dona, which was exhibited at the last meeting of the Royal Irish Academy. It has been put together at a guess, but different from the drawing. There is inside O'Barrdan's case another of silver plate some centuries older, and inside that the yew box, which originally contained the manuscripts, now so united by damp as to be apparently inseparable, and nearly illegible; for they have lost the colour of vellum, and are quite black and very much decayed. The old Irish version of the New Testament is well worthy of being edited; it is, I conceive, the oldest Latin version extant, and varies much from the Vulgate or Jerome's.

"The MS. enclosed in the yew box appears, from the two membranes handed me by your friend, Mr. ———, to be a copy of the Gospels—at least, those membranes were part of the two first membranes of the Gospel of St. Matthew, and, I would say, written in the fifth or sixth century; were probably the property of St. Tigernach himself, and passed most likely to the abbots of Blounish, his successors, as an heirloom, until it fell into the hands of the Maguires, the most powerful of the princes of the country now comprising the diocese of Clogher. Dr. O'Beirne's letter I trust you will publish. I feel much indebted to that gentleman for his courteous expressions towards me, and shall be most happy to have the pleasure of being personally known to him.

"You must make allowance for the hasty sketch which is here given. The advanced state of your printing would not allow me time for a more elaborate investigation.

"Believe me, my dear sir,

"Very sincerely yours, W. BETHAM."

"Portora, *August* 15, 1832.

"MY DEAR ———.—It is well you wrote to me about the Dona. Your letter, which reached me this day, has proved that I was mistaken in supposing that the promised drawing was no longer necessary. I had imagined that, as you must have seen the Dona with Mr. Smith, any communication from me on the subject must be superfluous. And now that I have taken up my pen in compliance with

[1] *All* the successors of the founder saints were called by the Irish, *comorbs*, or *corbs*. The reader will perceive that O'Carbry was a distant, but *not* the *immediate*, successor of St Tigernach.

your wish, what can I tell you that you have not perhaps conveyed to yourself by ocular inspection, and better than I can detail it?

"I accompanied Mr. S. to Brookborough, and asked very particularly of the old woman, late the possessor of the Dona, what she knew of its history; but she could say nothing about it, only that it had belonged to 'the Lord of Enniskillen.' This was the Fermanagh Maguire, who took an active part in the shocking rebellion of 1641, and was subsequently executed. His castle, the ruins of which are on the grounds of Portora, was stormed during the wars of that miserable time. When I entered on my inquiries for you, I anticipated much in the way of tradition, which, I hoped, might prove amusing at least; but disappointment met me on every hand. The old woman could not even detail distinctly how the Dona had come into her possession: it was brought into her family, she said, by a priest. The country people had imagined wonders relative to the contents of the box. The chief treasure it was supposed to contain was a lock of the Virgin Mary's hair!!!

"After much inquiry, I received the following vague detail from a person in this county; and let me remark, by-the-by, that though the possession of the Dona was a matter of boast to the Maguires, yet I could not gain the slightest information respecting it from even the most intelligent of the name. But now for the detail:—

"'Donagh O'Hanlon, an inhabitant of the upper part of this county (Fermanagh), went, about 600 years ago (longer than which time, in the opinion of a celebrated antiquary, the kind of engraving on it could not have been made), on a pious pilgrimage to Rome. His holiness of the Vatican, whose name has escaped the recollection of the person who gave this information, as a reward for this supererogatory journey, presented him with the Dona. As soon as Donagh returned, the Dona was placed in the Monastery of Aughadurcher (now Aughalurcher). But at the time when Cromwell was in this country the monastery was destroyed, and this *Ark* of the *Covenant* hid by some of the faithful at a small lake, named Lough Eye, between Lisbellaw and Tempo. It was removed thence when peace was restored, and again placed in some one of the neighbouring chapels, when, as before in Aughadurcher, the oaths were administered by the priests with all the superstition that a depraved imagination could invent, as "that their thighs might rot off," "that they might go mad," &c. &c.

"'When Kings James and William made their appearance, it was again concealed in Largy, an old castle at Sir H. Brooke's deer park. Father Antony Maguire, a priest of the Romish Church, dug it up from under the stairs in this old castle, after the Battle of the Boyne, deposited it in a chapel, and it was used as before.

"'After Father Antony's death it fell into the possession of his niece, who took it over to the neighbourhood of Florence Court. But the Maguires were not satisfied that a thing so sacred should depart from the family, and at their request it was brought back.'

"For the confirmation of the former part of this account, the informant refers you to Sir James Ware. I have not Ware's book, and cannot therefore tell you how much of this story is given by him, or whether any. In my opinion there is nothing detailed by him at all bearing on the subject. The latter part of the story rests, we are told, on tradition.

"As I confess myself not at all versed in Irish antiquities, it may appear somewhat presumptuous in me to venture an opinion respecting this box and its contents, which is, I understand, opposed to that of our spirited and intelligent antiquary, Sir Wm. Betham. I cannot persuade myself that either the box or the contained MSS. were of such an age as he claims for them. And, first, of the box:—

"At present the MSS. are contained in a wooden box: the wood is, I believe, *yew*. It cannot be pronounced, I think, with any certainty, whether the wooden box was originally part of the shrine of the precious MSS. It is very rude in its construction, and has not a top or lid. Indeed, it appears to me to have been a coarse, botched-up thing to receive the MSS. after the original box, which was made of brass, had fallen to pieces.

"The next thing that presents itself to us is the remnant of a brass box, washed with silver, and rudely ornamented with tracery. The two ends and the front are all that remain of the brass box.

"You may then notice what was evidently an addition of later times, the highly ornamented gilt-silver work, made fast on the remains of the brass box, and the chased compartments, which seemed to have formed the top or lid of the box. But, as you have seen the whole, I need not perhaps have troubled you with this description. I shall only direct your attention to the two inscriptions. In the chasing you will see that they are referred to their *supposed* places.

"The upper inscription, when deciphered, is—

"'Johannes : O'Karbri : Comorbanus : S. Tignacii : Pmisit.' For *S. Tignacii* I would conjecture *St. Ignacii*. P, I should conjecture to be *Presbyterus*. On this I should be very glad to have Sir William's opinion. I cannot imagine, if P stands part of a compound with *misit*, what it can mean. I would read and translate it thus—'John O'Carbery, coadjutor, priest of the order of St. Ignatius, *sent* it.'

"This inscription is on a narrow slip of silver, and is presumed to have formed part of the *under edge* of the *upper part* of the back of the box. The lower inscription is—

"'*Johannes O'Barrdan fabricavit*'

"This also is on a slip of silver, and appears to have fitted into a space on the upper surface, which is supposed to have been the top, and to have lain in between the two square compartments on the left hand : this is marked in the drawing. I have expressed myself here in the language of doubt, for the box is all in confusion.

"Now, on the inscriptions, I would say that they indicate to me a date much later than some gentlemen who have seen the box are willing to ascribe to it. In the island of Devenish, in our lake (Lough Erne), is an inscription that was discovered in the ruins (still standing) of a priory that was built there A.D. 1449. The characters in this inscription are much more remote from the Roman character in use among us than those used in the inscriptions on the box. The letters on the box bespeak a later period, when English cultivation had begun to produce some effect in our island, and the Roman character was winning its way into general use. I shall probably be able to let you see the Devenish inscription, and a *juxtaposition* of it and the others will satisfy you, I think, on this point. In my opinion, then, the box, with all its ornaments, must have been made at some time since the year 1449. I cannot think it reasonable to suppose that an inscription, containing many letters like the Roman characters, should be more ancient than one not only having fewer letters resembling them, but also having the letters that differ differing essentially.

"Now for the MSS.

"I am deficient in antiquarian lore : this I have already confessed ; but perhaps I want also the creative fancy and devoted faith of the genuine antiquary. I cannot, for example, persuade myself that a MS. written in a clear, uniform, *small* character of the Roman form could have been written in remote times, when there is reason to think that MSS. were written in uncial character only, without stops, and with few or no divisions into words, sentences, or paragraphs. The palimprest MS. examined by Dr. Barrett is in uncial characters, and is referred by him to the sixth or seventh century. *Cic. de Republica*, published by Angelo Mai, is assigned to much the same period. Small letters, and the distinctions above mentioned, were the invention of later times. I cannot therefore persuade myself that this MS. is of so early an age as some would ascribe to it, though I will not take it upon me to assign the precise time in which it was written. The characters are decidedly and distinctly those now called the Roman : they have not many abbreviations, as far as I could judge, and they are written with much clearness and regularity. They are not the *literæ cursivæ*, or those used in writing for the sake of facility and connection : they seemed rather formed more in imitation of printed letters. SECUNDUM—This imperfect attempt to present one of the words will explain my meaning. But I had better not weary you any more with

my crude notions. I shall be very glad to hear your opinion, or that of Sir William Betham, to whom I should bow with all the respect due to talent and worth. I must avow my distrust of Irish antiquities; yet, allow me to add that there is no man more willing to be converted from my heresy, if you would call it so, than

"My dear ———,

"Your friend and servant, A. O'BEIRNE."

PHIL PURCEL, THE PIG-DRIVER.

An Outline.

PHIL PURCEL was a singular character, for he was never married; but notwithstanding his singularity, no man ever possessed, for practical purposes, a more plentiful stock of duplicity. All his acquaintances knew that Phil was a knave of the first water, yet was he decidedly a general favourite. Now, as we hate mystery ourselves, we shall reveal the secret of this remarkable popularity; though, after all, it can scarcely be called so, for Phil was not the first cheat who has been popular in his day. The cause of his success lay simply in this:—that he never laughed; and none of our readers need be told that the appearance of a grave cheat in Ireland is an originality which almost runs up into a miracle. This gravity induced everyone to look upon him as a phenomenon. The assumed simplicity of his manners was astonishing, and the ignorance which he feigned so apparently natural that it was scarcely possible for the most keen sighted searcher into human motives to detect him. The only way of understanding the man was to deal with him; if, after *that*, you did not comprehend him thoroughly, the fault was not Phil's, but your own. Although not mirthful himself, he was the cause of mirth in others; for, without ever smiling at his own gains, he contrived to make others laugh at their losses. His disposition, setting aside laughter, was strictly anomalous. The most incompatible, the most unamalgamatable, and the most uncomeatable qualities that ever refused to unite in the same individual had no scruple to unite in Phil. But we hate metaphysics, which we leave to the mechanical philosophers, and proceed to state that Phil was a miser, which is the best explanation we can give of his gravity.

Ireland, owing to the march of intellect, and the superiority of modern refinement, has been for some years past, and is at present, well supplied with an abundant variety of professional men, every one of whom will undertake, for proper considerations, to teach us Irish all manner of useful accomplishments. The drawing-master talks of his profession; the dancing-master of *his* profession; the fidd'er, tooth-drawer, and corn-cutter (who, by the way, *reaps* a richer harvest than we do), since the devil has tempted the schoolmaster to go abroad, are all practising in his absence as professional men.

Now Phil must be included among this class of grandiloquent gentlemen, for he entered life as a Professor of Pig-driving ; and it is but justice towards him to assert that no corn-cutter of them all ever elevated his profession so high as Phil did that in which he practised. In fact, he raised it to the most exalted pitch of improvement of which it was then susceptible ; or, to use the cant of the day, he soon arrived at "the head of his profession."

In Phil's time, however, pig-driving was not so general, nor had it made such rapid advances as in modern times. It was then simply pig-driving, unaccompanied by the improvements of poverty, sickness, and famine. The governments of those days were not so enlightened as the governments of these. Political economy had not taught the people how to be poor upon the most scientific principles ; free trade had not shown the nation the most improved plan of reducing itself to the lowest possible state of distress ; nor liberalism enabled the working classes to scoff at religion, and wisely to stop at the very line that lies between outrage and rebellion. Many errors and inconveniences, now happily exploded, were then in existence. The people, it is true, were somewhat attached to their landlords, but still they were burdened with the unnecessary appendages of good coats and stout shoes ; were tolerably industrious, and had the mortification of being able to pay their rent, and feed in comfort. They were not, as they are now, free from new coats and old prejudices, nor improved by the intellectual march of politics and poverty. When either a man or a nation starves, it is a luxury to starve in an enlightened manner ; and nothing is more consolatory to a person acquainted with public rights and constitutional privileges than to understand those liberal principles upon which he fasts and goes naked.

From all we have said, the reader sees clearly that pig-driving did not then proceed upon so extensive a scale as it does at present. The people, in fact, killed many of them for their own use ; and we know not how it happened, but political ignorance and good bacon kept them in more flesh and comfort than those theories which have since succeeded so well in introducing the science of starvation as the basis of national prosperity. Irishmen are frequently taxed with extravagance, in addition to their other taxes ; but we should be glad to know what people in Europe reduce economy in the articles of food and clothing to such close practice as they do. Our governments and our landlords appear to be trying such an experiment upon our great power of living on a little food as the man did who entertained the warm expectation of being able to bring his horse to live without it : but who, when he had brought him to one straw *per diem*, found that the animal was compelled to decline the comforts of such economy, by dying in his own defence. In our ignorant days we had a trade, but no Custom-house ; and now, in our enlightened days, we have a Custom-house, but no trade. Our institutions have become absentees, like our landlords, and are to be found spending their money in London, in order to increase the prosperity and secure the attachment of Irishmen.

An old bachelor uncle of ours, in the country, seduced by the plausibility of a tailor's puff in the metropolis, sent him, in reliance upon what he professed in it, his height and weight for a suit of clothes. The clothes came; but as the old gentleman happened to be wry-necked, wore his head, in fact, upon one of his shoulders, and was a little humpbacked into the bargain—points which he either forgot, or declined mentioning—it is unnecessary to say that the clothes did not fit.

"I ought to have known," said the old gentleman, "from the peculiarity of my make, that no tailor could fit me without taking my measure."

In like manner may we say that England is legislating for us without taking our measure; and that her laws, consequently, are a bad fit, considering the unconscionable price we pay for them.

There was, in Ireland, an old breed of swine, which is now nearly extinct, except in some remote parts of the country, where they are still useful in the hunting season, particularly if dogs happen to be scarce.[1] They were a tall, loose species, with legs of an unusual length, with no flesh, short ears, as if they had been cropped for sedition, and with long faces of a highly intellectual cast. They were also of such activity that few greyhounds could clear a ditch or cross a field with more agility or speed. Their backs formed a rainbow arch, capable of being contracted or extended to an inconceivable degree; and their usual rate of travelling in droves was at mail-coach speed, or six Irish miles an hour, preceded by an outrider to clear the way, whilst their rear was brought up by another horseman, going at a three-quarter gallop.

In the middle of summer, when all nature reposed under the united influence of heat and dust, it was an interesting sight to witness a drove of them sweeping past, like a whirlwind, in a cloud of their own raising; their sharp and lengthy outlines dimly visible through the shining haze, like a flock of antelopes crossing the deserts of the east.

But, alas! for those happy days! This breed is now a curiosity—few specimens of it remaining except in the mountainous parts of the country, whither these lovers of liberty, like the free natives of the back settlements of America, have retired to avoid the encroachments of civilization, and exhibit their Irish antipathy to the slavish comforts of steamboat navigation, and the relaxing luxuries of English feeding.

Indeed, their patriotism, as evinced in an attachment to Ireland and Irish habits, was scarcely more remarkable than their sagacity. There is not an antiquarian among the members of that learned and useful body, the Irish Academy, who can boast such an intimate knowledge of the Irish language in all its shades of meaning and idiomatic beauty as did this once flourishing class of animals. Nor were they confined to the Irish tongue alone; many of them understood English too; and it was said of those that belonged to a convent, the members of which, in their intercourse with each other, spoke only in Latin, that they were

[1] We assure John Bull, on the authority of Phil Purcel, that this is a fact.

tolerable masters of that language, and refused to leave a potato field or plot of cabbages except when addressed in it. To the English tongue, however, they had a deep-rooted antipathy; whether it proceeded from the national feeling, or the fact of its not being sufficiently guttural, I cannot say: but be this as it may, it must be admitted that they were excellent Irish scholars, and paid a surprising degree of deference and obedience to whatever was addressed to them in their own language. In Munster, too, such of them as belonged to the hedge schoolmasters were good proficients in Latin; but it is on a critical knowledge of their native tongue that I take my stand. On this point they were unrivalled by the most learned pigs or antiquarians of their day; none of either class possessing, at that period, such a knowledge of Irish manners, nor so keen a sagacity in tracing out Irish *roots*.

Their education, it is true, was not neglected, and their instructors had the satisfaction of seeing that it was not lost. Nothing could present a finer display of true friendship, founded upon a sense of equality, mutual interest, and good-will, than the Irishman and his pig. The Arabian and his horse are proverbial; but had our English neighbours known as much of Ireland as they did of Arabia, they would have found as signal instances of attachment subsisting between the former as between the latter; and, perhaps, when the superior comforts of an Arabian hut are contrasted with the squalid poverty of an Irish cabin, they would have perceived a heroism and a disinterestedness evinced by the Irish parties that would have struck them with greater admiration.

The pigs, however, of the present day are a fat, gross, and degenerate breed; and more like well-fed aldermen than Irish pigs of the old school. They are, in fact, a proud, lazy, carnal race, entirely of the earth, earthy. John Bull assures us it is one comfort, however, that we do not eat, but ship them out of the country; yet, after all, with great respect to John, it is not surprising that we should repine a little on thinking of the good old times of sixty years since, when every Irishman could kill his own pig, and eat it when he pleased. We question much whether any measure that might make the eating of meat compulsory upon us would experience from Irishmen a very decided opposition. But it is very condescending in John to eat our beef and mutton; and as he happens to want both, it is particularly disinterested in him to encourage us in the practice of self-denial. It is possible, however, that we may ultimately refuse to banquet by proxy on our own provisions; and that John may not be much longer troubled to eat for us in that capacity.

The education of an Irish pig, at the time of which we write, was an important consideration to an Irishman. He, and his family, and his pig, like the Arabian and his horse, all slept in the same bed; the pig generally, for the sake of convenience, next the "stock." At meals the pig usually was stationed at the *scrahag*, or potato-basket; where the only instances of bad temper he ever displayed broke out in petty and unbecoming squabbles with the younger branches of the

family. Indeed, if he ever descended from his high station as a member of the domestic circle, it was upon these occasions, when, with a want of dignity accounted for only by the grovelling motive of self-interest, he embroiled himself in a series of miserable feuds and contentions about scraping the pot, or carrying off from the jealous urchins about him more than came to his share. In these heart-burnings about the good things of this world he was treated with uncommon forbearance: in his master he always had a friend, from whom, when he grunted out his appeal to him, he was certain of receiving redress. "Barney, behave, avick: lay down the potstick, an' don't be batin' the pig, the crathur."

In fact, the pig was never mentioned but with this endearing epithet of "crathur" annexed. "Barney, go an' call home the pig, the crathur, to his dinner, before it gets cowld an him." "Barney, go an' see if you can see the pig, the crathur; his buckwhist will soon be ready." "Barney, run an' dhrive the pig, the crathur, out of Larry Neil's phatie-field: an', Barney, whisper, a bouchal bawn, don't run *too* hard, Barney, for fraid you'd lose your breath. What if the crathur *does* get a taste o' the new phaties—small blame to him for the same!"

In short, whatever might have been the habits of the family, such were those of the pig. The latter was usually out early in the morning to take exercise, and the unerring regularity with which he returned at meal time gave sufficient proof that procuring an appetite was a work of supererogation on his part. If he came before the meal was prepared, his station was at the door, which they usually shut to keep him out of the way until it should be ready. In the meantime, so far as a forenoon serenade and an indifferent voice could go, his powers of melody were freely exercised on the outside. But he did not stop here: every stretch of ingenuity was tried by which a possibility of gaining admittance could be established. The hat and rags were repeatedly driven in from the windows, which from practice and habit he was enabled to approach on his hind legs; a cavity was also worn by the frequent grubbings of his snout under the door, the lower part of which was broken away by the sheer strength of his tusks, so that he was enabled, by thrusting himself between the bottom of it and the ground, to make a most unexpected appearance on the hearth, before his presence was at all convenient or acceptable.

But, independently of these two modes of entrance—*i.e.*, the door and window—there was also a third, by which he sometimes scrupled not to make a descent upon the family. This was by the chimney. There are many of the Irish cabins built for economy's sake against slopes in the ground, so that the labour of erecting either a gable or side-wall is saved by the perpendicular bank that remains after the site of the house is scooped away. Of the facilities presented by this peculiar structure the pig never failed to avail himself. He immediately mounted the roof (through which, however, he sometimes took an unexpected flight), and traversing it with caution, reached the chimney, into which he deliberately *backed* himself, and, with no small

share of courage, went down precisely as the northern bears are said to descend the trunks of trees during the winter, but with far different motives.

In this manner he cautiously retrograded downwards with a hardihood which set furze bushes, brooms, tongs, and all other available weapons of the cabin at defiance. We are bound, however, to declare that this mode of entrance, which was only resorted to when every other failed, was usually received by the cottager and his family with a degree of mirth and good humour that were not lost upon the sagacity of the pig. In order to save him from being scorched, which he deserved for his temerity, they usually received him in a creel, often in a quilt, and sometimes in the tattered blanket, or large pot, out of which he looked with a humorous conception of his own enterprise that was highly diverting. We must admit, however, that he was sometimes received with the comforts of a hot poker, which Paddy pleasantly called "givin' him a *warm* welcome."

Another trait in the character of these animals was the utter scorn with which they treated all attempts to fatten them. In fact, the usual consequences of good feeding were almost inverted in their case; and although I might assert that they became leaner in proportion to what they received, yet I must confine myself to truth by stating candidly that this was not the fact; that there was a certain state of fleshlessness to which they arrived, but from which they neither advanced nor receded by good feeding or bad.

At this point, despite of all human ingenuity, they remained stationary for life; received the bounty afforded them with a greatness of appetite resembling the fortitude of a brave man, which rises in energy according to the magnitude of that which it has to encounter. The truth is they were scandalous hypocrites; for, with the most prodigious capacity for food, they were spare as philosophers, and fitted evidently more for the chase than the sty; rather to run down a buck or a hare for the larder, than to have a place in it themselves. If you starved them, they defied you to diminish their flesh; and if you stuffed them like aldermen, they took all they got, but disdained to carry a single ounce more than if you gave them whey thickened with water. In short, they gloried in maceration and liberty; were good Irish scholars, sometimes acquainted with Latin; and their flesh, after the trouble of separating it from a superfluity of tough skin, was excellent *venison* so far as it went.

Now Phil Purcel, whom we will introduce more intimately to the reader by-and-by, was the son of a man who always kept a pig. His father's house had a small loft, to which the ascent was by a step-ladder through a door in the inside gable. The first good thing ever Phil was noticed for was said upon the following occasion. His father happened to be called upon, one morning before breakfast, by his landlord, who, it seems, occasionally visited his tenantry to encourage, direct, stimulate, or reprove them, as the case might require. Phil was a boy then, and sat on the hob in the corner, eyeing the landlord and his father during their conversation. In the meantime the pig

came in, and deliberately began to ascend the ladder with an air of authority that marked him as one in the exercise of an established right. The landlord was astonished at seeing the animal enter the best room in the house, and could not help expressing his surprise to old Purcel.

"Why, Purcel, is your pig in the habit of treating himself to the comforts of your best room?"

"The pig is it, the crathur? Why, your haner," said Purcel, after a little hesitation, "it sometimes goes up of a mornin' to waken the childhre, particularly when the buckwhist happens to be late. It doesn't like to be waitin'; and sure none of us like to be kept from the male's mate, your haner, when we want it, no more than it, the crathur."

"But I wonder your wife permits so filthy an animal to have access to her rooms in this manner."

"Filthy!" replied Mrs. Purcel, who felt herself called upon to defend the character of the pig, as well as her own, "why, one would think, sir, that any crathur that's among Christycen childhre, like one o' themselves, couldn't be filthy. I could take it to my dyin' day, that there's not a claner or dacenter pig in the kingdom than the same pig. It never misbehaves, the crathur, but goes out, as wise an' riglar, jist by a look, your haner, the poor crathur!"

"I think," observed Phil, from the hob, "that nobody has a betther right to the run of the house, whedher upstairs or downstairs, *than him that pays the rint.*"

"Well said, my lad!" observed the landlord, laughing at the quaint ingenuity of Phil's defence. "His payment of the rent is the best defence possible, and no doubt should cover a multitude of his errors."

"A multitude of his shins you mane, sir," said Phil, "for thrath he's all shin."

In fact, Phil from his infancy had an uncommon attachment to these animals, and by a mind naturally shrewd and observing made himself as intimately acquainted with their habits and instincts, and the best modes of managing them, as ever the celebrated *Cahir na Cappul* did with those of the horse. Before he was fifteen he could drive the most vicious and obstinate pig as quietly before him as a lamb; yet no one knew how nor by what means he had gained the secret that enabled him to do it. Whenever he attended a fair, his time was principally spent among the pigs, where he stood handling and examining, and pretending to buy them, although he seldom had half a crown in his pocket. At length, by hoarding up such small sums as he could possibly lay his hands on, he got together the price of a "slip," which he bought, reared, and educated in a manner that did his ingenuity great credit. When this was brought to its *ne plus ultra* of fatness he sold it, and purchased two more, which he fed in the same way. On disposing of these, he made a fresh purchase, and thus proceeded, until, in the course of a few years, he was a well-known pig-jobber.

Phil's journeys as a pig-driver to the leading sea-port town nearest

him were always particularly profitable. In Ireland swine are not kept in sties, as they are among English feeders, but permitted to go at liberty through pasture fields, commons, and along roadsides, where they make up as well as they can for the scanty pittance allowed them at home during meal-times. We do not, however, impeach Phil's honesty; but simply content ourselves with saying that when his journey was accomplished he mostly found the original number with which he had set out increased by three or four, and sometimes by half a dozen. Pigs in general resemble each other, and it surely was not Phil's fault if a stray one, feeding on the roadside or common, thought proper to join his flock and see the world. Phil's object, we presume, was only to take care that his original number was not diminished, its increase being a matter in which he felt little concern.

He now determined to take a professional trip to England, and that this might be the more productive, he resolved to purchase a drove of the animals we have been describing. No time was lost in this speculation. The pigs were bought up as cheaply as possible, and Phil set out, for the first time in his life, to try with what success he could measure his skill against that of a Yorkshireman. On this occasion he brought with him a pet, which he had with considerable pains trained up for purposes hereafter to be explained.

There was nothing remarkable in the passage, unless that every creature on board was sea-sick, except the pigs; even to them, however, the change was a disagreeable one; for to be pent up in the hold of a ship was a deprivation of liberty which, fresh as they were from their native hills, they could not relish. They felt, therefore, as patriots, a loss of freedom, but not a whit of appetite; for, in truth, of the latter no possible vicissitude short of death could deprive them.

Phil, however, with an assumed air of simplicity absolutely stupid, disposed of them to a Yorkshire dealer at about twice the value they would have brought in Ireland, though, as pigs went in England, it was low enough. He declared that they had been fed on *tip-top* feeding; which was literally true, as he afterwards admitted that the tops of nettles and potato stalks constituted the only nourishment they had got for three weeks before.

The Yorkshireman looked with great contempt upon what he considered a miserable essay to take him in.

"What a fule this Hirishmun mun bea," said he, "to think to teake me in! Had he said that them there Hirish swoine were *badly* feade, I'd ha' thought it fairish enough on un; but to seay that they was oll weal feade on *tip-top* feeadin'! Nea, nea! I knaws weal enough that they was noat feade on nothin' at oll, which meakes them looak so poorish! Howsomever, I shall fatten them, I'se warrant—I'se warrant I shall!"

When driven home to sties somewhat more comfortable than the cabins of unfortunate Irishmen, they were well supplied with food which would have been very often considered a luxury by poor Paddy himself, much less by his pigs.

"Measter," said the boor who had seen them fed, "them there Hirish pigs ha' not teasted nout for a moonth yet: they feade like nout I never seed o' my laife!"

"Ay! ay!" replied the master, "I'se warrant they'll soon fatten—I'se warrant they shall, Hodge—they be praime feeders—I'se warrant they shall; and then, Hodge, we've bit the soft Hirishmun."

Hodge gave a knowing look at his master, and grinned at this observation.

The next morning Hodge repaired to the sties to see how they were thriving; when, to his great consternation, he found the feeding troughs clean as if they had been washed, and not a single Irish pig to be seen or heard about the premises; but to what retreat the animals could have betaken themselves was completely beyond his comprehension. He scratched his head, and looked about him in much perplexity.

"Dang un!" he exclaimed, "I never seed nout like this."

He would have proceeded in a strain of cogitation equally enlightened, had not a noise of shouting, alarm, and confusion in the neighbourhood excited his attention. He looked about him, and to his utter astonishment saw that some extraordinary commotion prevailed, that the country was up, and the hills alive with people, who ran, and shouted, and wheeled at full flight in all possible directions. His first object was to join the crowd, which he did as soon as possible, and found that the pigs he had shut up the preceding night in sties whose enclosures were at least four feet high had cleared them like so many *chamois*, and were now closely pursued by the neighbours, who rose *en masse* to hunt down and secure such dreadful depredators.

The waste and mischief they had committed in one night were absolutely astonishing. Bean and turnip-fields, and vegetable enclosures of all descriptions, kitchen-gardens, corn-fields, and even flower-gardens, were rooted up and destroyed with an appearance of system which would have done credit to Terry Alt himself.

Their speed was the theme of every tongue. Hedges were taken in their flight, and cleared in a style that occasioned the country people to turn up their eyes and scratch their thick, incomprehensive heads in wonder. Dogs of all degrees bit the dust, and were caught up dead in stupid amazement by their owners, who began to doubt whether or not these extraordinary animals were swine at all. The depredators in the meantime had adopted the Horatian style of battle. Whenever there was an ungenerous advantage taken in the pursuit, by slipping dogs across or before their path, they shot off at a tangent through the next crowd, many of whom they prostrated in their flight; by this means they escaped the dogs until the latter were somewhat exhausted, when, on finding one in advance of the rest, they turned, and, with standing bristles and burning tusks, fatally checked their pursuer in his full career. To wheel and fly until another got in advance was then the plan of fight; but, in fact, the conflict was conducted on the part of the Irish pigs with a fertility

of expediency that did credit to their country, and established for those who displayed it the possession of intellect far superior to that of their opponents. The pigs now began to direct their course towards the sties in which they had been so well fed the night before. This being their last flight, they radiated towards one common centre with a fierceness and celerity that occasioned the women and children to take shelter within doors. On arriving at the sties, the ease with which they shot themselves over the four-feet walls was incredible. The farmer had caught the alarm, and just came out in time to witness their return; he stood with his hands driven down into the pockets of his red, capacious waistcoat, and uttered not a word. When the last of them came bounding into the sty, Hodge approached, quite breathless and exhausted.

"Oh, measter," he exclaimed, "these be not Hirish pigs at oll, they be Hirish deevils; and you mun ha' bought 'em fra a cunning mon!"

"Hodge," replied his master, "I'se be bit—I'se heard feather talk about un. That breed's *true* Hirish; but I'se try and sell 'em to Squoire Jolly to hunt wi' as beagles, for he wants a pack. They do say all the swoine that the deevils were put into ha' been drawned; but for my peart, I'se sure that some on un must ha' escaped to Hireland."

Phil, during the commotion excited by his knavery in Yorkshire, was traversing the country in order to dispose of his remaining pig; and the manner in which he effected his first sale of it was as follows:—

A gentleman was one evening standing with some labourers by the wayside, when a tattered Irishman approached, equipped in a pair of white dusty brogues, stockings without feet, old patched breeches, a bag slung across his shoulder, his coarse shirt lying open about a neck tanned by the sun into a reddish yellow, a hat nearly the colour of the shoes, and a hay-rope tied for comfort about his waist: in one hand he also held a straw-rope, that depended from the hind leg of a pig which he drove before him; in the other was a cudgel, by the assistance of which he contrived to limp on after it, his two shoulder-blades rising and falling alternately with a shrugging motion that indicated great fatigue.

When he came opposite where the gentleman stood he checked the pig, which instinctively commenced feeding upon the grass by the edge of the road.

"Och," said he, wiping his brow with the cuff of his coat, "*mavrone orth a amuck*,[1] but I'm kilt wit you. Musha, Gad bless yer haner, an' maybe ye'd buy a slip of a pig fwhrom me, that has my heart bruck, so she has, if ever anybody's heart was bruck wit the likes of her; an' sure so there was, no doubt, or I wouldn't be as I am wit her. I'll give her a dead bargain, sir; for it's only to get her aff av my hands I'm wantin', plase yer haner—*husth, amuck—husth, a veehonee!*[2] Be asy, an' me in conwersation wit his haner here!"

[1] My sorrow on you for a pig. [2] Silence, pig! Silence, you vagabond!

"You are an Irishman?" the gentleman inquired.

"I am, sir, from Cannaught, yer haner, an' 'ill sell the crathur dag cheap, all out. Asy, you thief!"

"I don't want the pig, my good fellow," replied the Englishman, without evincing curiosity enough to inquire how he came to have such a commodity for sale.

"She'd be the darlint in no time wit you, sir; the run o' your kitchen 'ud make her up a beauty, your haner, along wit no throuble to the sarwints about sweepin' it, or anything. You'd only have to lay down the *scrahag* on the flure, or the misthress, Gad bless her, could do it, an' not lave a crumblin' behind her, besides sleepin', yer haner, in the carner beyant, if she'd take the throuble."

The sluggish phlegm of the Englishman was stirred up a little by the twisted and somewhat incomprehensible nature of these instructions.

"How far do you intend to proceed to-night, Paddy?" said he.

"The sarra one o' myself knows, plase yer haner: sure we've an ould sayin' of our own in Ireland beyant—that he's a wise man can tell how far he'll go, sir, till he comes to his journey's ind. I'll give this crathur to you at more nor her value, yer haner."

"More!—why the man knows not what he's saying," observed the gentleman; "*less* you mean, I suppose, Paddy?"

"More or less, sir, you'll get her a bargain; an' Gad bless you, sir!"

"But it is a commodity which I don't want at present. I am very well stocked with pigs as it is. Try elsewhere."

"She'd flog the counthry side, sir; an' if the misthress herself, sir, ud shake the wishp o' sthraw fwhor her in the kitchen, sir, near the whoire. Yer haner could spake to her about it; an' in no time put a knife in her whin you plased. In regard o' the other thing, sir—she's like a Christyeen, yer haner, an' no throuble, sir, if you'd be seein' company or anything."

"It's an extraordinary pig this of yours."

"It's no lie fwhor you, sir; she's as clane an' dacent a crathur, sir! Och, if the same pig ud come into the care o' the misthress, Gad bliss her! an' I'm sure if she has as much gudness in her face as the hanerable *dinnha ousahl*—the handsome gintleman she's married upon!—you'll have her thrivin' bravely, sir, shartly, plase God, if you'll take courage. Will I dhrive her up the aveny fwhor you, sir? A good gintlewoman I'm sure, is the same misthriss! Will I dhrive her up fwhor you, sir? *Shadh amuck—shadh dherim!*"[1]

"No, no; I have no further time to lose; you may go forward."

"Thank yer haner: is it whorid toarst the house abow, sir? I wouldn't be standin' up, sir, wit you about a thrifle; an' you'll have her, sir, fwhor anything you plase beyant a pound, yer haner; an' 'tis throwin' her away it is: but one can't be hard wit a rale gintleman, anyway."

[1] Behave yourself, pig—behave, I say.

"You only annoy me, man; besides, I don't want the pig; you lose time; I don't want to buy it, I repeat to you."

"Gad bliss you, sir—Gad bliss you! Maybe if I'd make up to the misthress, yer haner! Thrath she wouldn't turn the crathur from the place, in regard that the tindherness ow the feelin' would come ower her—the rale gintlewoman, anyhow! 'Tis dag chape you have her at what I said, sir; an' Gad bliss you!"

"Do you want to compel me to purchase it whether I will or no?"

"Thrath, it's whor next to nothin' I'm givin' her to you, sir; but sure you can make your own price at anything beyant a pound. *Hurrish amuck—stadh! anish*—be asy, you crathur, sure you're gettin' into good quarthers, anyhow—goin' to the hanerable English gintleman's kitchen; an' Gad knows it's a pleasure to dale wit 'em. Och, the world's differ there is betuxt thim an' our own dirty Irish buckeens, that 'ud shkin a bad skilleen, an' pay their debts wit the remaindher. The gateman ud let me in, yer haner, an' I'll meet you at the big house abow."

"Upon my honour, this is a good jest," said the gentleman, absolutely teased into compliance; "you are forcing me to buy that which I don't want."

"Sure you will, sir; you'll want more nor that yit, plase Gad, if you be spared. Come, amuck—come, you crathur; faix, you're in luck, so you are—gettin' so good a place wid his haner here, that you won't know yourself shortly, plase Gad."

He immediately commenced driving his pig towards the gentleman's residence with such an air of utter simplicity as would have imposed upon any man not guided by direct inspiration. Whilst he approached the house, its proprietor arrived there by another path a few minutes before him, and, addressing his lady, said:

"My dear, will you come and look at a purchase which an Irishman has absolutely compelled me to make. You had better come and see himself too, for he's the greatest simpleton of an Irishman I have ever seen."

The lady's curiosity was more easily excited than that of her husband. She not only came out, but brought with her some ladies who had been on a visit, in order to hear the Irishman's brogue and to amuse themselves at his expense. Of the pig, too, it appeared she was determined to know something.

"George, my love, is the pig also from Ireland?"

"I don't know, my dear; but I should think so from its fleshless appearance. I have never seen so spare an animal of that class in this country."

"Juliana," said one of the ladies to her companion, "don't go too near him. Gracious! look at the bludgeon, or beam, or something he carries in his hand, to fight and beat the people, I suppose: yet," she added, putting up her glass, "the man is actually not ill-looking; and though not so tall as the Irishman in Sheridan's Rivals, he is well made."

"His eyes are good," said her companion—"a bright grey and

keen; and were it not that his nose is rather short and turned up, he would be human."

"George, my love," exclaimed the lady of the mansion, "he is like most Irishmen of his class that I have seen; indeed, scarcely so intelligent, for he *does* appear quite a simpleton, except, perhaps, a lurking kind of expression, which is a sign of their humour, I suppose. Don't you think so, my love?"

"No, my dear; I think him a bad specimen of the Irishman. Whether it is that he talks our language but imperfectly, or that he is a stupid creature, I cannot say; but in selling the pig just now he actually told me that he would let me have it for *more* than it was worth."

"Oh, that was so laughable! We will speak to him, though."

The degree of estimation in which these civilised English held Phil was so low that this conversation took place within a few yards of him, precisely as if he had been an animal of an inferior species, or one of the aborigines of New Zealand.

"Pray what is your name?" inquired the matron.

"Phadhrumshagh Corfuffle, plase yer haner: my fadher carrid the same name upon him. We're av the Corfuffles av Leatheraum Laghy, my lady; but my granmudher was a Dornyeen, an' my own mudher, plase yer haner, was o' the Shudhurthaghans o' Ballymadoghy, my ladyship. *Stadh anish, amuck bradagh*—be asy, can't you, an' me in conwershation wit the beauty o' the world that I'm spakin' to."

"That's the Negus language," observed one of the young ladies, who affected to be a wit and a blue-stocking; "it's Irish and English mixed."

"Thrath, an' but that the handsome young lady's so purty," observed Phil, "I'd be sayin' myself that that's a quare remark upon a poor unlarned man; but Gad bless her, she *is* so purty what can one say for lookin' an her!"

"The poor man, Adelaide, speaks as well as he can," replied the lady, rather reprovingly: "he is by no means so wild as one would have expected."

"Candidly speaking, much *tamer* than *I* expected," rejoined the wit. "Indeed, I meant the poor Irishman no offence."

"Where did you get the pig, friend? and how came you to have it for sale so far from home?"

"Fwhy it isn't whor sale, my lady," replied Phil, evading the former question; "the masther here, Gad bless him an' spare him to you, ma'am!—thrath an' it's his four quarthers that knew how to pick out a wife, anyhow, whor beauty an' all hanerable whormations o' grandheur—so he did; an' well he desarves you, my lady: faix, it's a fine houseful o' thim you'll have, plase God—an' fwhy not? whin it's all in the coorse o' Providence, bein' both so handsome;—he gev me a pound note whor her, my ladyship, an' his own plisure aftherwards; an' I'm now watin' to be ped."

"What kind of a country is Ireland, as I understand you are an Irishman?"

"Thrath, my lady, it's like fwhat maybe you never seen—a fool's purse, ten guineas goin' out whor one that goes in."

"Upon my word, that's wit," observed the young blue-stocking.

"What is your opinion of Irishwomen?" the lady continued; "are they handsomer than the English ladies, think you?"

"Murdher, my lady," says Phil, raising his caubeen, and scratching his head, in pretended perplexity, with his finger and thumb, "fwhat am I to say to that, ma'am, and all of yees to the fwhore? But the sarra one av me will give it agin the darlins beyant."

"But which do you think the more handsome?"

"Thrath I do, my lady; the Irish and English women would flog the world, an' sure it would be a burnin' shame to go to set them agin one another fwhor beauty."

"Whom do you mean by the 'darlins beyant'?" inquired the blue-stocking, attempting to pronounce the words.

"Faix, miss, who but the crathurs ower the wather, that kills us entirely, so they do."

"I cannot comprehend him," she added to the lady of the mansion.

"Arrah, maybe I'd make bould to take up the manners from you fwhor a while, my lady, plase yer haner?" said Phil, addressing the latter.

"I do not properly understand you," she replied, "speak plainer."

"Throth, that's fwhat they do, yer haner; they never gos about the bush wit yees—the gintlemen, ma'am, of our counthry, fwhin they do be coortin' yees; an' I want to ax, ma'am, if you plase, fwhat *you* think of *thim*, that is, if ever any of them had the luck to come acrass you, my lady?"

"I have not been acquainted with many Irish gentlemen," she replied; "but I hear they are men of a remarkable character."

"Faix, 'tis you may say that," replied Phil; "sowl, my lady, 'tis well for the masther here, plase yer haner, sir, that none o' them met wit the misthress before you was both marrid, or, wit riverence be it spoken, 'tis the sweet side o' the tongue they'd be layin' upon you, ma'am, an' the rough side to the masther himself, along wit a few scrapes of a pen on a slip o' paper, jist to appoint the time and place, in regard of her ladyship's purty complexion—an' who can deny that, anyway? Faix, ma'am, they've a way wit them, my counthrymin, that the ladies like well enough to thravel by. Asy, you deludher, an' me in conwersaytion wit the quality."

"I am quite anxious to know how you came by the pig, Paddy?" said the wit.

"Arrah, miss, sure 'tisn't pigs you're thinkin' on, an' us discoorsin' about the gintlemen from Ireland, that you're all so fond ow here; faix, miss, they're the boys that can fwhoight for yees, an' ud rather be bringin' an Englishman to the *sad* fwhor your sakes, nor atin' bread an' butther. Fwhy, now, miss, if you were beyant wit us, the sarra ounce o' gunpowdher we'd have in no time, for love or money."

"Upon my word, I should like to *see* Ireland!" exclaimed the blue-stocking; "and why would the gunpowder get scarce, pray?"

"Faix, fightin' about you, miss, an' all of yees sure; for myself sees no differ at all in your hanerable fwhormations of beauty an' grandeur, an' all high-flown admirations."

"But tell us where you got the pig, Paddy?" persisted the wit, struck naturally enough with the circumstance. "How do you come to have an Irish pig so far from home?"

"Fwhy thin, miss, 'twas to a brodher o' my own I was bringin' it, that was livin' down the counthry here, an' fwhin I came to fwhere he lived, the sarra one o' me knew the place, in regard o' havin' forgot the name of it entirely, an' there was I wit the poor crathur an my hands till his haner here bought it whrom me—Gad bless you, sir!"

"As I live, there's a fine Irish blunder," observed the wit; "I shall put it in my commonplace book—it will be so genuine. I declare I'm quite delighted!"

"Well, Paddy," said the gentleman, "here's your money. There's a pound for you, and that's much more than the miserable animal is worth."

"Thrath, sir, you have the crathur at what we call in Ireland a bargain.[1] Maybe yer haner ud spit upon the money fwhor luck, sir. It's the way we do, sir, beyant."

"No, no, Paddy, take it as it is. Good heavens! what barbarous habits these Irish have in all their modes of life, and how far they are removed from anything like civilization!"

"Thank yer haner. Faix, sir, this'll come so handy for the landlord at home, in regard o' the rint for the bit o' phatie ground, so it will, if I can get home agin widout brakin' it. Arrah, maybe yer haner ud give me the price o' my bed, an' a bit to ate, sir, an' keep me from brakin' in upon this, sir, Gad bless the money! I'm thinkin' o' the poor wife an' childher, sir—strivin', so I am, to do fwhor the darlins."

"Poor soul," said the lady, "he is affectionate in the midst of his wretchedness and ignorance."

"Here—here," replied the Englishman, anxious to get rid of him, "there's a shilling, which I give because you appear to be attached to your family."

"Och, och, fwhat can I say, sir, only that long may you reign ower your family an' the hanerable ladies to the fwhore, sir. Gad fwhor ever bliss you, sir, but you're the kind, noble gintleman, 'an all belongin' to you, sir!"

Having received the shilling, he was in the act of departing, when, after turning it deliberately in his hand, shrugging his shoulders two or three times, and scratching his head, with a vacant face he approached the lady.

"Musha, ma'am, an' maybe ye'd have the tindherness in your heart, seein' that the gudness is in yer hanerable face, anyway, an' it would save the skillycen that the masther gev'd me for payin' my passage, so it would, jist to bid the steward, my ladyship, to ardher me a bit to ate in the kitchen below. The hunger, ma'am, is hard upon me, my lady;

[1] Ironically—a take in.

an' fwhat I'm doin', sure, is in regard o' the wife at home, an' the childher, the crathurs, an' me far fwhrom them, in a sthrange counthry, Gad help me!"

"What a singular being, George! and how beautiful is the economy of domestic affection exemplified, notwithstanding his half-savage state, in the little plans he devises for the benefit of his wife and children!" exclaimed the good lady, quite unconscious that Phil was a bachelor. "Juliana, my love, desire Simmons to give him his dinner. Follow this young lady, good man, and she will order you refreshment."

"Gad's blessin' upon your beauty an' gudness, my lady; an' a man might thravel far afore he'd meet the likes o' you for aither o' them. Is it the other handsome young lady I'm to folly, ma'am?"

"Yes," replied the young wit, with an arch smile; "come after *me*."

"Thrath, miss, an' it's an asy task to do that, anyway; wit a heart an' half I go, acushla; an' I seen the day, miss, that it's not much o' mate an' dhrink ud throuble me, if I jist got lave to be lookin' at you, wit nothin' but yourself to think an. But the wife an' childher, miss, makes great changes in us entirely."

"Why you are quite gallant, Paddy."

"Thrath, I suppose I am now, miss; but you see, my hanerable young lady, that's our fwhailin' at home: the counthry's poor, an' we can't help it, whedher or not. We're fwhorced to it, miss, whin we come ower here, by you, an' the likes o' you, mavourneen!"

Phil then proceeded to the house, was sent to the kitchen by the young lady, and furnished through the steward with an abundant supply of cold meat, bread, and beer, of which he contrived to make a meal that somewhat astonished the servants. Having satisfied his hunger, he deliberately, but with the greatest simplicity of countenance, filled the wallet, which he carried slung across his back, with whatever he had left, observing as he did it:—

"Fwhy, thin, 'tis sthrange it is that the same custom is wit us in Ireland beyant that is here; fwhor whinever a traveller is axed in, he always brings fwhat he doesn't ate along wit him. An sure enough it's the same here amongst yees," he added, packing up the bread and beef as he spoke; "but Gad bliss the custom, anyhow, fwhor it's a good one!"

When he had secured the provender, and was ready to resume his journey, he began to yawn, and to exhibit the most unequivocal symptoms of fatigue.

"Arrah, sir," said he to the steward, "you wouldn't have e'er an ould barn that I'd throw myself in fwhor the night? The sarra leg I have to put undher me, now that I've got stiff wit the sittin' so lang;[1] that, an' a wishp o' sthraw, sir, to sleep an, an' Gad bliss you!"

"Paddy, I cannot say," replied the steward; "but I shall ask my master, and if he orders it, you shall have the comfort of a hard floor and clean straw, Paddy—that you shall."

[1] This is pronounced as in the first syllable of "Langolee,"—not like the Scotch 'lang."

"Many thanks to you, sir: it's in your face, in thrath, the sar.. gudness an' ginerosity."

The gentleman, on hearing Phil's request to be permitted a sleeping place in the barn, was rather surprised at his wretched notion of comfort than at the request itself.

"Certainly, Timmins, let him sleep there," he replied; "give him sacks and straw enough. I daresay he will feel the privilege a luxury, poor devil, after his fatigue. Give him his breakfast in the morning, Timmins. Good heavens," he added, "what a singular people! Wha an amazing progress civilization must make before these Irish can b_ brought at all near the commonest standard of humanity!"

At this moment Phil, who was determined to back the steward's request, approached them.

"Paddy," said the gentleman, anticipating him, "I have ordered you sacks and straw in the barn, and your breakfast in the morning before you set out."

"Thrath," said Phil, "if there's e'er a sthray blissin' goin', depind an it, sir, you'll get it, fwhor your hanerable ginerosity to the sthranger. But about the 'slip,' sir—if the misthress herself ud shake the wishp o' sthraw fwhor her in the far carner o' the kitchen below, an' see her gettin' her supper, the crathur, before she'd put her to bed, she'd be thrivin' like a salmon, sir, in less than no time; an' to ardher the sarwints, sir, if you plase, not to be defraudin' the crathur of the big piatees. Fwhor in regard it cannot spake fwhor itself, sir, it frets as wise as a Christyeen, when it's not honestly thrated."

"Never fear, Paddy; we shall take good care of it."

"Thank you, sir. But I aften heerd, sir, that you dunna how to feed pigs in this counthry in ardher to mix the fwhat an' lane, lair (layer) about."

"And how do you manage that in Ireland, Paddy?"

"Fwhy, sir, I'll tell you how the mishthress, Gad bliss her, will manage it fwhor you. Take the crathur, sir, an' feed it to-morrow till it's as full as a tick—that's fwhor the *fwhat*, sir; thin let her give it nothin' at all the next day, but keep it black fwhastin'—that's fwhor the *lane* (lean). Let her stick to that, sir, keepin' it atin' one day an fastin' anodher, for six months, thin put a knife in it, an' if you don't have the fwhat an' lane, lair about, beautiful all out, fwhy niver bleeve Phadrumshagh Corfuffle agin. Ay, indeed!"

The Englishman looked keenly at Phil, but could only read in his countenance a thorough and implicit belief in his own recipe for mixing the fat and lean. It is impossible to express his contempt for the sense and intellect of Phil; nothing could surpass it but the contempt which Phil entertained for him.

"Well," said he to the servant, "I have often heard of the barbarous habits of the Irish, but I must say that the incidents of this evening have set my mind at rest upon the subject. Good heavens! when will ever this besotted country rise in the scale of nations! Did ever a human being hear of such a method of feeding swine! I should have thought it incredible had I heard it from any but an Irishman!"

Phil then retired to the kitchen, where his assumed simplicity highly amused the servants, who, after an hour or two's fun with "Paddy," conducted him in a kind of contemptuous procession to the barn, where they left him to his repose.

The next morning he failed to appear at the hour of breakfast, but his non-appearance was attributed to his fatigue, in consequence of which he was supposed to have overslept himself. On going, however, to call him from the barn, they discovered that he had decamped; and on looking after the "slip" it was found that both had taken French leave of the Englishman. Phil and the pig had actually travelled fifteen miles that morning before the hour on which he was missed—Phil going at a dog's trot, and the pig following at such a respectful distance as might not appear to identify them as fellow-travellers. In this manner Phil sold the pig to upwards of two dozen intelligent English gentlemen and farmers, and after winding up his bargains successfully, both arrived in Liverpool, highly delighted by their commercial trip through England.

The passage from Liverpool to Dublin, in Phil's time, was far different from that which steam and British enterprise have since made it. A vessel was ready to sail for the latter place on the very day of Phil's arrival in town; and, as he felt rather anxious to get out of England as soon as he could, he came, after selling his pig in good earnest, to the aforesaid vessel to ascertain if it were possible to get a deck passage. The year had then advanced to the latter part of autumn; so that it was the season when those inconceivable hordes of Irishmen who emigrate periodically for the purpose of lightening John Bull's labour were in the act of returning to that country in which they find little to welcome them—but domestic affection and misery.

When Phil arrived at the vessel, he found the captain in a state of peculiar difficulty. About twelve or fourteen gentlemen of rank and property, together with a score or upwards of highly respectable persons, but of less consideration, were in equal embarrassment. The fact was, that as no other vessel left Liverpool that day, about five hundred Irishmen, mostly reapers and mowers, had crowded upon deck, each determined to keep his place at all hazards. The captain, whose vessel was small, and none of the stoutest, flatly refused to put to sea with such a number. He told them it was madness to think of it; he could not risk the lives of the other passengers, nor even their own, by sailing with five hundred on the deck of so small a vessel. If one half would withdraw peaceably, he would carry the other half, which was as much as he could possibly accomplish. They were very willing to grant that what he said was true; but, in the meantime, not a man of them would move, and to clear out such a number of fellows, who loved nothing better than fighting, armed, too, with sickles and scythes, was a task beyond either his ability or inclination to execute. He remonstrated with them, entreated, raged, swore, and threatened, but all to no purpose. His threats and entreaties were received with equal good humour. Gibes and jokes were broken on him without number, and as his passion increased, so did their mirth, until nothing

could be seen but the captain in vehement gesticulation, the Irishmen huzzaing him so vociferously that his damns and curses, uttered against them, could not reach even his own ears.

"Gentlemen," said he to his cabin passengers, "for the love of Heaven, tax your invention to discover some means whereby to get one-half of these men out of the vessel, otherwise it will be impossible that we can sail to-day. I have already proffered to take one-half of them by lot, but they will not hear of it; and how to manage I am sure I don't know."

The matter, however, was beyond their depth: the thing seemed utterly impracticable, and the chances of their putting to sea were becoming fainter and fainter.

"Bl—t their eyes!" he at length exclaimed, "the ragged, hungry devils! If they heard me with decency, I could bear their obstinacy better: but no, they must turn me into ridicule, and break their jests and turn their cursed barbarous grins upon me in my own vessel. I say, boys," he added, proceeding to address them once more—"I say, savages, I have just three observations to make. The first is ——"

"Arrah, captain, avourneen, hadn't you betther get upon a stool," said a voice, "an' put a text before it, thin divide it dacently into three halves, an' make a sarmon of it."

"Captain, you wor intinded for the Church," added another. "You're the moral [1] of a Methodist preacher, if you wor dressed in black."

"Let him alone," said a third; "he'd be a jinteel man enough in a wilderness, an' ud make an illigant dancin'-masther to the bears."

"He's as graceful as a shaved pig on its hind legs, dancin' the 'Baltihorum jig.'"

The captain's face was literally black with passion: he turned away with a curse, which produced another huzza, and swore that he would rather encounter the Bay of Biscay in a storm than have anything to do with such an unmanageable mob.

"Captain," said a little, shrewd-looking Connaught man, "what ud you be willin' to give anybody, over an' abow his free passage, that ud tell you how to get one half o' them out?"

"I'll give him a crown," replied the captain, "together with grog and rations to the eyes: I'll be hanged if I don't."

"Then I'll do it fwhor you, sir, if you keep your word wit me."

"Done," said the captain, "it's a bargain, my good fellow, if you accomplish it; and what's more, I'll consider you a knowing one."

"I'm a poor Cannaught man, your haner," replied our friend Phil, "but what's to prevint me thryin'! Tell thim," he continued, "that you *must* go; purtind to be fwhor takin' thim wit you, sir. Put Munshther agin Cannaught, one half an this side, an' the odher an that, to keep the crathur of a ship steady, your haner; an' fwhin you have thim half an' half, wit a little room betuxt thim, 'Now,' says your haner, 'boys, you're divided into two halves; if one side kicks the other out o' the ship, I'll bring the cunquirors."

[1] Model.

The captain said not a word in reply to Phil, but immediately ranged the Munster and Connaught men on each side of the deck—a matter which he found little difficulty in accomplishing, for each party, hoping that he intended to take themselves, readily declared their province, and stood together. When they were properly separated, there still remained about forty or fifty persons belonging to neither province; but, at Phil's suggestion, the captain paired them off to each division, man for man, until they were drawn up into two bodies.

"Now," said he, "there you stand: let one half of you drub the other out of the vessel, and the conquerors shall get their passage."

Instant was the struggle that ensued for the sake of securing a passage, and from the anxiety to save a shilling, by getting out of Liverpool on that day. The saving of the shilling is, indeed, a consideration with Paddy which drives him to the various resources of begging, claiming kindred with his resident countrymen in England, pretended illness, coming to be passed from parish to parish, and all the turnings and shiftings which his reluctance to part with money renders necessary. Another night, therefore, and probably another day in Liverpool would have been attended with expense. This argument prevailed with all: with Munster as well as with Connaught, and they fought accordingly.

When the attack first commenced each party hoped to be able to expel the other without blows. This plan was soon abandoned. In a few minutes the sticks and fists were busy. Throttling, tugging, cuffing, and knocking down—shouting, hallooing, huzzaing, and yelling gave evident proofs that the captain, in embracing Phil's proposal, had unwittingly applied the match to a mine whose explosion was likely to be attended with disastrous consequences. As the fight became warm, and the struggles more desperate, the hooks and scythes were resorted to; blood began to flow, and men to fall, disabled and apparently dying. The immense crowd which had now assembled to witness the fight among the Irishmen could not stand tamely by and see so many lives likely to be lost, without calling in the civil authorities. A number of constables in a few minutes attended; but these worthy officers of the civil authorities experienced very uncivil treatment from the fists, cudgels, and sickles of *both* parties. In fact, they were obliged to get from among the rioters with all possible celerity, and to suggest to the magistrates the necessity of calling in the military.

In the meantime the battle rose into a furious and bitter struggle for victory. The deck of the vessel was actually slippery with blood, and many were lying in an almost lifeless state. Several were pitched into the hold, and had their legs and arms broken by the fall; some were tossed over the sides of the vessel, and only saved from drowning by the activity of the sailors; and not a few of those who had been knocked down in the beginning of the fray were trampled into insensibility.

The Munster men at length gave way; and their opponents, following up their advantage, succeeded in driving them to a man out of the

vessel just as the military arrived. Fortunately their interference was unnecessary. The ruffianly captain's object was accomplished; and as no lives were lost, nor any injury more serious than broken bones and flesh-wounds sustained, he got the vessel in readiness, and put to sea.

Who would not think that the Irish were a nation of misers, when our readers are informed that all this bloodshed arose from their unwillingness to lose a shilling by remaining in Liverpool another night? Or who could believe that these very men, on reaching home, and meeting their friends in a fair or market, or in a public-house after mass on a Sunday, would sit down and spend, recklessly and foolishly, that very money which in another country they part with as if it were their very heart's blood? Yet so it is! Unfortunate Paddy is wiser anywhere than at home, where wisdom, sobriety, and industry are best calculated to promote his own intersts.

This slight sketch of Phil Purcel we have presented to our readers as a specimen of the low, cunning Connaught man; and we have only to add that neither the pig-selling scene, nor the battle on the deck of the vessel in Liverpool, is fictitious. On the contrary, we have purposely kept the tone of our description of the latter circumstance beneath the reality. Phil, however, is not drawn as a general portrait, but as one of that knavish class of men called "jobbers," a description of swindlers certainly not more common in Ireland than in any other country. We have known Connaught men as honest and honourable as it was possible to be; yet there is a strong prejudice entertained against them in every other province of Ireland, as is evident by the old adage, "Never *trust* a Connaught man."

THE LIANHAN SHEE.

An Irish Superstition.

ONE summer evening Mary Sullivan was sitting at her own well-swept hearth-stone, knitting feet to a pair of sheep's-grey stockings, for Bartley, her husband. It was one of those serene evenings in the month of June, when the decline of day assumes a calmness and repose resembling what we might suppose to have irradiated Eden when our first parents sat in it before their fall. The beams of the sun shone through the windows in clear shafts of amber light, exhibiting millions of those atoms which float to the naked eye within its mild radiance. The dog lay barking in his dream at her feet, and the grey cat sat purring placidly upon his back, from which even his occasional agitation did not dislodge her.

Mrs. Sullivan was the wife of a wealthy farmer, and niece to the Rev. Felix O'Rourke; her kitchen was consequently large, comfort-

able, and warm. Over where she sat jutted out the "brace," well lined with bacon; to the right hung a well-scoured salt-box, and to the left was the jamb, with its little Gothic paneless window to admit the light. Within it hung several ash rungs, seasoning for flail-sooples, a dozen of eel-skins, and several stripes of horse-skin, as hangings for them. The dresser was a "parfit white," and well furnished with the usual appurtenances. Over the door and on the "threshel" were nailed, "for luck," two horse-shoes that had been found by accident. In a little "hole" in the wall, beneath the salt-box, lay a great bottle of holy water to keep the place purified; and against the cope-stone of the gable, on the outside, grew a large lump of house-leek, as a specific for sore eyes.

In the corner of the garden were a few stalks of tansy, "to kill the thievin' worms in the childhre, the crathurs," together with a little Rosenoble, Solomon's Seal, and Bugloss, each for some medicinal purpose. The "lime wather" Mrs. Sullivan could make herself, and the "bog bane" for the *linh roe*, or heart-burn, grew in their own meadow-drain; so that, in fact, she had within her reach a very decent pharmacopœia, perhaps as harmless as that of the profession itself. Lying on the top of the salt-box was a bunch of fairy flax, and sewed in the folds of her own scapular was the dust of what had once been a four-leafed shamrock, an invaluable specific "for seein' the good people," if they happened to come within the bounds of vision. Over the door in the inside, over the beds, and over the cattle in the outhouses, were placed branches of withered palm that had been consecrated by the priest on Palm Sunday; and when the cows happened to calve, this good woman tied, with her own hands, a woollen thread about their tails, to prevent them from being overlooked by evil eyes, or elf-shot by the fairies, who seem to possess a peculiar power over females of every species during the season of parturition. It is unnecessary to mention the variety of charms which she possessed for that obsolete malady the colick, for tooth-aches, headaches, or for removing warts, and taking motes out of the eyes; let it suffice to inform our readers that she was well stocked with them; and that, in addition to this, she, together with her husband, drank a potion made up and administered by a herb-doctor, for preventing for ever the slightest misunderstanding or quarrel between man and wife. Whether it produced this desirable object or not our readers may conjecture, when we add that the herb-doctor, after having taken a very liberal advantage of their generosity, was immediately compelled to disappear from the neighbourhood, in order to avoid meeting with Bartley, who had a sharp look out for him, not exactly on his own account, but "in regard," he said, "that it had no effect upon *Mary*, at all at all;" whilst Mary, on the other hand, admitted its efficacy upon herself, but maintained "that *Bartley* was worse nor ever afther it."

Such was Mary Sullivan, as she sat at her own hearth, quite alone, engaged as we have represented her. What she may have been meditating on we cannot pretend to ascertain; but after some time

she looked sharply into the "backstone," or hob, with an air of anxiety and alarm. By-and-by she suspended her knitting, and listened with much earnestness, leaning her right ear over to the hob, from whence the sounds to which she paid such deep attention proceeded. At length she crossed herself devoutly, and exclaimed, "Queen of saints about us!—is it back yees are? Well, sure there's no use in talkin', bekase they say you know what's said of you, or to you—an' we may as well spake yees fair. Hem—musha, yees are welcome back, crickets, avourneence! I hope that, not like the last visit ye ped us, yees are comin' for luck now! Moolyeen[1] died, anyway, soon afther your other *kailyee*,[2] ye crathurs, ye. Here's the bread, an' the salt, an' the male for yees, an' we wish yees well. Eh?—saints above, if it isn't listenin' they are jist like a Christhen! Wurrah, but yees are the wise an' the quare crathurs all out."

She then shook a little holy water over the hob, and muttered to herself an Irish charm or prayer against the evils which crickets are often supposed by the peasantry to bring with them, and requested, still in the words of the charm, that their presence might, on that occasion, rather be a presage of good fortune to man and beast belonging to her.

"There now, ye *dhonhans* ye, sure ye can't say that ye're ill thrated here, anyhow, or ever was mocked or made game of in the same family. You have got your hansel, an' full an' plenty of it; hopin' at the same time that you'll have no rason in life to cut our best clothes from rivinge. Sure an' I didn't desarve to have my brave stuff *long body* cut an' riddled the way it was the last time yees wor here, an' only bekase little Barny, that has but the sinse of a *gorsoon*, tould yees in a joke to pack off wid yourselves somewhere else. Musha, never heed what the likes of him says; sure he's but a *caudy*,[3] that doesn't mane ill, only the bit o' divarsion wid yees."

She then resumed her knitting, occasionally stopping, as she changed her needles, to listen, with her ear set, as if she wished to augur, from the nature of their chirping, whether they came for good or evil. This, however, seemed to be beyond her faculty of translating their language; for after sagely shaking her head two or three times, she knit more busily than before.

At this moment the shadow of a person passing the house darkened the window opposite which she sat, and immediately a tall female, of a wild dress and aspect, entered the kitchen.

"*Gho manhy dhea ghud, a ban chohr!* the blessin' o' goodness upon you, dacent woman," said Mrs. Sullivan, addressing her in those kindly phrases so peculiar to the Irish language.

Instead of making her any reply, however, the woman, whose eye glistened with a wild depth of meaning, exclaimed in low tones, apparently of much anguish, "*Husht, husht, dherum!* husht, husht, I say—let me alone—I will do it—will you husht? I will, I say—I will—there now—that's it—be quiet, an' I will do it—be quiet!" and as she

[1] A cow without horns. [2] Short visit. [3] A little boy.

thus spoke, she turned her face back over her left shoulder, as if some invisible being dogged her steps, and stood bending over her.

"*Gho manhy ahea ghud, a ban chohr, dherhum areesht!* the bless.n' o' God on you, honest woman, I say again," said Mrs. Sullivan, repeating that *sacred* form of salutation with which the peasantry address each other. "'Tis a fine evenin', honest woman, glory be to Him that sent the same, and amin! If it was cowld, I'd be axin' you to draw your chair into the fire; but, anyway, won't you sit down?"

As she ceased speaking the piercing eye of the strange woman became riveted on her with a glare which, whilst it startled Mrs. Sullivan, seemed full of an agony that almost abstracted her from external life. It was not, however, so wholly absorbing as to prevent it from expressing a marked interest, whether for good or evil, in the woman who addressed her so hospitably.

"Husht, now—husht," she said, as if aside—"husht, won't you—sure I may speak *the thing* to her—you said it—there now, husht!" And then fastening her dark eyes on Mrs. Sullivan, she smiled bitterly and mysteriously.

"I know you well," she said, without, however, returning the *blessing* contained in the usual reply to Mrs. Sullivan's salutation—"I know you well, Mary Sullivan—husht, now, husht—yes, I know you well, and the power of all that you carry about you; but you'd be better than you are—and that's well enough *now*—if you had sense to know—ah, ah, ah!—what's this!" she exclaimed abruptly, with three distinct shrieks, that seemed to be produced by sensations of sharp and piercing agony.

'In the name of goodness, what's over you, honest woman?" inquired Mrs. Sullivan, as she started from her chair, and ran to her in a state of alarm, bordering on terror. "Is it sick you are?"

The woman's face had got haggard, and its features distorted; but in a few minutes they resumed their peculiar expression of settled wildness and mystery. "Sick!" she replied, licking her parched lips, "*awirck, awirck*, look! look!" and she pointed, with a shudder that almost convulsed her whole frame, to a lump that rose on her shoulders: this, be it what it might, was covered with a red cloak, closely pinned and tied with great caution about her body. "'Tis here!—I have it!"

"Blessed mother!" exclaimed Mrs. Sullivan, tottering over to her chair, as finished a picture of horror as the eye could witness—"this day's Friday; the saints stand betwixt me an' all harm! Oh, holy Mary, protect me! *Nhanim an airh*," &c., and she forthwith proceeded to bless herself, which she did thirteen times in honour of the blessed Virgin and the twelve Apostles.

"Ay, it's as you see!" replied the stranger, bitterly. "It is here—husht, now—husht, I say—I will say *the thing* to her, mayn't I? Ay, indeed, Mary Sullivan, 'tis with me always—always. Well, well, no, I won't. I won't—easy—oh, blessed saints, easy, and I won't!"

In the meantime Mrs. Sullivan had uncorked her bottle of holy water, and plentifully bedewed herself with it, as a preservative against this mysterious woman and her dreadful secret.

"Blessed mother above!" she ejaculated, "the *Lianhan Shee!*" And as she spoke, with the holy water in the palm of her hand, she advanced cautiously, and with great terror, to throw it upon the stranger and the unearthly thing she bore.

"Don't attempt it!" shouted the other, in tones of mingled fierceness and terror; "do you want to give *me* pain without keeping *yourself* anything at all safer? Don't you know *it* doesn't care about your holy water? But I'd suffer for it, an' perhaps so would you."

Mrs. Sullivan, terrified by the agitated looks of the woman, drew back with affright, and threw the holy water with which she intended to purify the other on her own person.

"Why, thin, you lost crathur, who or what are you at all?—don't, don't—for the sake of all the saints and angels of heaven, don't come next or near me—keep your distance—but what are you, or how did you come to get that 'good thing' you carry about wid you?"

"Ay, indeed!" replied the woman bitterly, "as if I would or could tell you that! I say, you woman, you're doing what's not right in asking me a question you ought not let cross your lips—look to yourself, and what's over you."

The simple woman, thinking her meaning literal, almost leaped off her seat with terror, and turned up her eyes to ascertain whether or not any dreadful appearance had approached her, or hung over her where she sat.

"Woman," said she, "I spoke you kind an' fair, an' I wish you well—but ——"

"But what?" replied the other—and her eyes kindled into deep and profound excitement, apparently upon very slight grounds.

"Why—hem—nothin' at all sure, only——"

"Only what?" asked the stranger, with a face of anguish that seemed to torture every feature out of its proper lineaments.

"Dacent woman," said Mrs. Sullivan, whilst the hair began to stand with terror upon her head, "sure it's no wondher in life that I'm in a perplexity, whin *Lianhan Shee* is undher the one roof wid me. 'Tisn't that I want to know anything at all about it—the dear forbid I should; but I never hard of a person bein' tormented wid it as you are. I always used to hear the people say that it thrated its friends well."

"Husht!" said the woman, looking wildly over her shoulder, "I'll not tell: it's on myself I'll leave the blame! Why, will you never pity me? Am I to be night and day tormented? Oh, you're wicked and cruel for no reason!"

'Thry," said Mrs. Sullivan, "an' bless yourself; call on God."

"Ah!" shouted the other, "are you going to get me killed?" and as she uttered the words a spasmodic working which must have occasioned great pain, even to torture, became audible in her throat; her bosom heaved up and down, and her head was bent repeatedly on her breast, as if by force.

"Don't mention that name," said she, "in my presence, except you mean to drive me to utter distraction. I mean," she continued, after considerable effort to recover her former tone and manner—"hear me

with attention—I mean, woman—you, Mary Sullivan—that if you mention that holy name, you might as well keep plunging sharp knives into my heart! Husht! peace to me for one minute, tormentor! Spare me something; I'm in your power!"

"Will you ate anything?" said Mrs. Sullivan; "poor crathur, you look like hunger an' distress; there's enough in the house, blessed be them that sent it! an' you had betther thry an' take some nourishment, anyway," and she raised her eyes in a silent prayer of relief and ease for the unhappy woman, whose unhallowed associations had, in her opinion, sealed her doom.

"Will I?—will I?—oh!" she replied, "may you never know misery for offering it! Oh, bring me something—some refreshment—some food—for I'm dying with hunger."

Mrs. Sullivan, who, with all her superstition, was remarkable for charity and benevolence, immediately placed food and drink before her, which the stranger absolutely devoured—taking care occasionally to secrete under the protuberance which appeared behind her neck a portion of what she ate. This, however, she did, not by stealth, but openly; merely taking means to prevent the concealed thing from being, by any possible accident, discovered.

When the craving of hunger was satisfied, she appeared to suffer less from the persecution of her tormentor than before; whether it was, as Mrs. Sullivan thought, that the food with which she plied it appeased in some degree its irritability, or lessened that of the stranger, it was difficult to say; at all events, she became more composed; her eyes resumed somewhat of a natural expression; each sharp, ferocious glare, which shot from them with such intense and rapid flashes, partially disappeared; her knit brows dilated, and part of a forehead which had once been capacious and handsome lost the contractions which deformed it by deep wrinkles. Altogether the change was evident, and very much relieved Mrs. Sullivan, who could not avoid observing it.

"It's not that I care much about it, if you'd think it not right o' me, but it's odd enough for you to keep the lower part of your face muffled up in that black cloth, an' then your forehead, too, is covered down on your face a bit? If they're part of the *bargain* "—and she shuddered at the thought—"between you an' anything that's not good—hem!—I think you'd do well to throw thim off o' you, an' turn to thim that can protect you from everything that's bad. Now, a scapular would keep all the divils in hell from one; an' if you'd ——"

On looking at the stranger she hesitated, for the wild expression of her eyes began to return.

"Don't begin my punishment again," replied the woman; "make no allus——don't make mention in my presence of anything that's good. Husht—husht—it's beginning—easy now—easy! No," said she, "I came to tell you that only for my breaking a vow I made to this thing upon me, I'd be happy instead of miserable with it. I say, it's a good thing to have, if the person will use this bottle," she added, producing one, "as I will direct them."

"I wouldn't wish, for my part," replied Mrs. Sullivan, "to have any-

thing to do wid it—neither act nor part ;" and she crossed herself devoutly on contemplating such an unholy alliance as that at which her companion hinted.

"Mary Sullivan," replied the other, "I can put good fortune and happiness in the way of you and yours. It is for you the good is intended ; if *you* don't get both, *no other* can," and her eyes kindled as she spoke like those of the Pythoness in the moment of inspiration.

Mrs. Sullivan looked at her with awe, fear, and a strong mixture of curiosity ; she had often heard that the *Lianhan Shee* had, through means of the person to whom it was bound, conferred wealth upon several, although it could never render this important service to those who exercised direct authority over it. She, therefore, experienced something like a conflict between her fears and a love of that wealth the possession of which was so plainly intimated to her.

"The money," said she, "would be one thing, but to have the *Lianhan Shee* planted over a body's shouldher—och ! the saints preserve us !—why, if it could be managed widout havin' act or part wid *that thing*, people would do anything in rason an' fairity."

"You have this day been kind to me," replied the woman, "and that's what I can't say of many—dear help me !—husht ! Every door is shut in my face ! Does not every cheek get pale when I am seen ? If I meet a fellow-creature on the road, they turn into the field to avoid me : if I ask for food, it's to a deaf ear I speak ; if I am thirsty, they send me to the river. What house would shelter me ? In cold, in hunger, in *dhruth*, in storm, and in tempest, I am alone and unfriended, hated, feared, an' avoided ; starving in the winter's cold, and burning in the summer's heat. All this is my fate here ; and—oh ! oh ! oh !—have mercy, tormentor—have mercy ! I will not lift my thoughts *there*—I'll keep the paction—but spare me *now !*"

She turned round as she spoke, seeming to follow an invisible object, or, perhaps, attempting to get a more complete view of the mysterious being which exercised such a terrible and painful influence over her. Mrs. Sullivan, also, kept her eye fixed upon the lump, and actually believed that she saw it move. Fear of incurring the displeasure of what it contained, and a superstitious reluctance harshly to thrust a person from her door who had eaten of her food, prevented her from desiring the woman to depart.

"In the name of goodness," she replied, "I will have nothing to do wid your gift. Providence, blessed be his name, has done well for me an' mine ; and it mightn't be right to go beyant what it has pleased *him* to give me."

"A rational sentiment !—I mean there's good sense in what you say," answered the stranger : "but you need not be afraid," and she accompanied the expression by holding up the bottle and kneeling. "Now," she added, "listen to me, and judge for yourself if what I say, when I swear it, can be a lie." She then proceeded to utter oaths of the most solemn nature, the purport of which was to assure Mrs. Sullivan that drinking of the bottle would be attended with no danger.

"You see this little bottle : drink it. Oh, for my sake and your own,

drink it ; it will give wealth without end to you, and to all belonging to you. Take one half of it before sunrise, and the other half when he goes down. You must stand while drinking it with your face to the east in the morning ; and at night to the west. Will you promise to do this ?"

"How would drinkin' the bottle get me money?" inquired Mrs. Sullivan, who certainly felt a strong tendency of heart to the wealth.

"That I can't tell now, nor would you understand it even if I could ; but you will know all when what I say is complied with."

"Keep your bottle, dacent woman. I wash my hands out of it : the saints above guard me from the timptation ! I'm sure it's not right, for as I'm a sinner, 'tis gettin' stronger every minute widin me ! Keep it ; I'm loth to bid anyone that *ett* o' my bread to go from my hearth, but if you go, I'll make it worth your while. Saints above, what's comin' over me. In my whole life I never had such a hankerin' afther money ! Well, well, but it's quare entirely !"

"Will you drink it ?" asked her companion. "If it does hurt or harm to you or yours, or anything but good, may what is hanging over me be fulfilled !" and she extended a thin but, considering her years, not ungraceful arm, in the act of holding out the bottle to her kind entertainer.

"For the sake of all that's good and gracious, take it without scruple —it is not hurtful; a child might drink every drop that's in it. Oh, for the sake of all you love, and of all that love you, take it !" and as she urged her, the tears streamed down her cheeks.

"No, no," replied Mrs. Sullivan, "it'll never cross my lips ; not if it made me as rich as ould Henderson, that airs his guineas in the sun, for fraid they'd get light by lyin' past."

"I entreat you to take it !" said the strange woman.

"Never, never !—once for all—I say I won't ; so spare your breath."

The firmness of the good housewife was not, in fact, to be shaken ; so, after exhausting all the motives and arguments with which she could urge the accomplishment of her design, the strange woman, having again put the bottle into her bosom, prepared to depart.

She had now once more become calm, and resumed her seat with the languid air of one who has suffered much exhaustion and excitement. She put her hand upon her forehead for a few moments, as if collecting her faculties, or endeavouring to remember the purport of their previous conversation. A slight moisture had broken through her skin, and altogether, notwithstanding her avowed criminality in entering into an unholy bond, she appeared an object of deep compassion.

In a moment her manner changed again, and her eyes blazed out once more, as she asked her alarmed hostess :

"Again, Mary Sullivan, will you take the gift that I have it in my power to give you ? aye or no ? Speak, poor mortal, if you know what is for your own good ?"

Mrs. Sullivan's fears, however, had overcome her love of money,

particularly as she thought that wealth obtained in such a manner could not prosper ; her only objection being to the means of acquiring it.

"Oh!" said the stranger, "am I doomed never to meet with anyone who will take the promise off me by drinking of this bottle? Oh! but I am unhappy! What it is to fear—ah! ah!—and keep *his* commandments. Had *I* done so in my youthful time, I wouldn't now —ah—merciful mother, is there no relief? kill me, tormentor ; kill me outright, for surely the pangs of hereafter cannot be greater than those you now make me suffer. Woman," said she, and her muscles stood out in extraordinary energy—"woman, Mary Sullivan—ay, if you should kill me—blast me—where I stand, I will say the word—woman —you have daughters—teach them—to fear——" Having got so far, she stopped—her bosom heaved up and down—her frame shook dreadfully—her eyeballs became lurid and fiery—her hands were clenched, and the spasmodic throes of inward convulsion worked the white froth up to her mouth ; at length she suddenly became like a statue, with this wild supernatural expression intense upon her, and with an awful calmness, by far more dreadful than excitement could be, concluded by pronouncing, in deep, husky tones, the name of God.

Having accomplished this with such a powerful struggle, she turned round with pale despair in her countenance and manner, and with streaming eyes slowly departed, leaving Mrs. Sullivan in a situation not at all to be envied.

In a short time the other members of the family, who had been out at their evening employments, returned. Bartley, her husband, having entered somewhat sooner than his three daughters from milking, was the first to come in ; presently the girls followed, and in a few minutes they sat down to supper, together with the servants, who dropped in one by one, after the toil of the day. On placing themselves about the table, Bartley as usual took his seat at the head ; but Mrs. Sullivan, instead of occupying hers, sat at the fire in a state of uncommon agitation. Every two or three minutes she would cross herself devoutly, and mutter such prayers against spiritual influences of an evil nature as she could compose herself to remember.

"Thin why don't you come to your supper, Mary," said the husband, "while the sowans are warm? Brave and thick they are this night, anyway."

His wife was silent, for so strong a hold had the strange woman and her appalling secret upon her mind, that it was not till he repeated his question three or four times—raising his head with surprise, and asking, "Eh, thin, Mary, what's come over you—is it unwell you are?"—that she noticed what he said.

"Supper!" she exclaimed, "unwell! 'tis a good right I'd have to be unwell, even if I was, which I am not—that is to *say*, unwell—but I'm all through other—I hope nothin' bad will happen, anyway. Feel my face, Nannie," she added, addressing one of her daughters, "it's as cowld an' wet as a limestone—ay, an' if you found me a corpse before you, it wouldn't be at all strange."

There was a general pause at the seriousness of this intimation. The husband rose from his supper, and went up to the hearth where she sat.

"Turn round to the light," said he; "why, Mary dear, in the name of wondher, what ails you? for you're like a corpse sure enough. Can't you tell us what has happened, or what put you in such a state? Why, childhre, the cowld sweat's teemin' off her!"

The poor woman, unable to sustain the shock produced by her interview with the stranger, found herself getting more weak, and requested a drink of water; but before it could be put to her lips, she laid her head upon the back of the chair and fainted. Grief and uproar and confusion followed this alarming incident. The presence of mind, so necessary on such occasions, was wholly lost; one ran here, and another there, all jostling against each other, without being cool enough to render her proper assistance. The daughters were in tears, and Bartley himself was dreadfully shocked by seeing his wife apparently lifeless before him.

She soon recovered, however, and relieved them from the apprehension of her death, which they thought had actually taken place. "Mary," said her husband, "something quare entirely has happened, or you wouldn't be in this state!"

"Did any of you see a strange woman lavin' the house a minute or two before yees came in?" she inquired.

"No," they replied, "not a stim of anyone did we see."

"Wurrah dheelish! No?—now is it possible yees didn't?" She then described her, but all declared they had seen no such person.

"Bartley, whisper," said she, and beckoning him over to her, in few words she revealed the secret. The husband grew pale and crossed himself. "Mother of Saints! childhre," said he, "a *Lianhan Shee!*" The words were no sooner uttered than every countenance assumed the pallidness of death: and every right hand was raised in the act of blessing the person and crossing the forehead. "*The Lianhan Shee!*" all exclaimed in fear and horror. "This day's Friday, God betwixt us an' harm!"

It was now after dusk, and the hour had already deepened into the darkness of a calm, moonless summer night; the hearth, therefore, in a short time, became surrounded by a circle consisting of every person in the house; the door was closed and securely bolted; a struggle for the safest seat took place; and to Bartley's shame be it spoken, he lodged himself on the hob within the jamb, as the most distant situation from the fearful being known as the *Lianhan Shee.* The recent terror, however, brooded over them all; their topic of conversation was the mysterious visit, of which Mrs. Sullivan gave a painfully accurate detail; whilst every ear of those who composed her audience was set, and every single hair of their heads bristled up, as if awakened into distinct life by the story. Bartley looked into the fire soberly, except when the cat, in prowling about the dresser, electrified him into a start of fear, which sensation went round every link of the living chain about the hearth.

The next day the story spread through the whole parish accumulating in interest and incident as it went. Where it received the touches, embellishments, and emendations with which it was amplified, it would be difficult to say ; everyone told it, forsooth, *exactly* as he heard it from another ; but, indeed, it is not improbable that those through whom it passed were unconscious of the additions it had received at their hands. It is not unreasonable to suppose that imagination in such cases often colours highly without a premeditated design of falsehood. Fear and dread, however, accompanied its progress ; such families as had neglected to keep holy water in their houses borrowed some from their neighbours ; every old prayer which had become rusty from disuse was brightened up ; charms were hung about the necks of cattle, and gospels about those of children ; crosses were placed over the doors and windows ; no unclean water was thrown out before sunrise or after dusk ;

> "E'en those prayed now who never prayed before,
> And those who always prayed still prayed the more."

The inscrutable woman who caused such general dismay in the parish was an object of much pity. Avoided, feared, and detested, she could find no rest for her weary feet, nor any shelter for her unprotected head. If she was seen approaching a house, the door and windows were immediately closed against her; if met on the way, she was avoided as a pestilence. How she lived no one could tell, for none would permit themselves to know. It was asserted that she existed without meat or drink, and that she was doomed to remain possessed of life, the prey of hunger and thirst, until she could get some one weak enough to break the spell by drinking her hellish draught, to taste which, they said, would be to change places with herself and assume her despair and misery.

There had lived in the country, about six months before her appearance in it, a man named Stephenson. He was unmarried, and the last of his family. This person led a solitary and secluded life, exhibiting during the last years of his existence strong symptoms of eccentricity, which, for some months before his death, assumed a character of unquestionable derangement. He was found one morning hanging by a halter in his own stable, where he had, under the influence of his malady, committed suicide. At this time the public press had not, as now, familiarised the minds of the people to that dreadful crime, and it was consequently looked upon *then* with an intensity of horror of which we can scarcely entertain any adequate notion. His farm remained unoccupied, for while an acre of land could be obtained in any other quarter no man would enter upon such unhallowed premises. The house was locked up, and it was currently reported that Stephenson and the devil each night repeated the hanging scene in the stable; and that when the former was committing the "hopeless sin," the halter slipped several times from the beam of the stable loft, when Satan came, in the shape of a dark-complexioned man with a hollow voice, and secured the rope until Stephenson's end was accomplished.

In this stable did the wanderer take up her residence at night; and when we consider the belief of the people in the night-scenes which occurred in it, we need not be surprised at the new feature of horror which this circumstance superadded to her character. Her presence and appearance in the parish were dreadful; a public outcry was soon raised against her, which, were it not from fear of her power over their lives and cattle, would have ended in her death. None, however, had courage to grapple with her, or to attempt expelling her by violence, lest a signal vengeance might be taken on any who dared to injure a woman that could call in the terrible aid of the *Lianhan Shee.*

In this state of feeling they applied to the parish priest, who, on hearing the marvellous stories related concerning her, and on questioning each man closely upon his authority, could perceive that, like most other reports, they were to be traced principally to the imagination and fears of the people. He ascertained, however, enough from Bartley Sullivan to justify a belief that there was something certainly uncommon about the woman; and being of a cold, phlegmatic disposition, with some humour, he desired them to go home, if they were wise—he shook his head mysteriously as he spoke—"and do the woman no injury, if they didn't wish"——and with this abrupt hint he sent them about their business.

This, however, did not satisfy them. In the same parish lived a suspended priest, called Father Philip O'Dallaghy, who supported himself, as most of them do, by curing certain diseases of the people—miraculously! He had no other means of subsistence, nor, indeed, did he seem strongly devoted to life, or to the pleasures it afforded. He was not addicted to those intemperate habits which characterise "blessed priests" in general; spirits he never tasted, nor any food that could be termed a luxury, or even a comfort. His communion with the people was brief and marked by a tone of severe, contemptuous misanthropy. He seldom stirred abroad except during morning, or in the evening twilight, when he might be seen gliding amidst the coming darkness like a dissatisfied spirit. His life was an austere one, and his devotional practices were said to be of the most remorseful character. Such a man, in fact, was calculated to hold a powerful sway over the prejudices and superstitions of the people. This was true. His power was considered almost unlimited, and his life one that would not disgrace the highest saint in the calendar. There were not wanting some persons in the parish who hinted that Father Felix O'Rourke, the parish priest, was himself rather reluctant to incur the displeasure, or challenge the power of the *Lianhan Shee*, by driving its victim out of the parish. The opinion of these person was, in its distinct, unvarnished reality, that Father Felix absolutely showed the white feather on this critical occasion—that he became shy, and begged leave to decline being introduced to this intractable pair—seeming to intimate that he did not at all relish adding them to the stock of his acquaintances.

Father Philip they considered as a decided contrast to him on this point. His stern and severe manner, rugged, and when occasion

demanded, daring, they believed suitable to the qualities requisite for sustaining such an interview. They accordingly waited on him; and after Bartley and his friends had given as faithful a report of the circumstances as, considering all things, could be expected, he told Bartley he would hear from Mrs. Sullivan's own lips the authentic narrative. This was quite satisfactory, and what was expected from him. As for himself, he appeared to take no particular interest in the matter, further than that of allaying the ferment and alarm which had spread through the parish.

"Plase your reverence," said Bartley, "she came in to Mary, and she alone in the house, and for the matther o' that, I believe she laid hands upon her, and tossed and tumbled the crathur, and she but a sickly woman, through the four corners of the house. Not that Mary lets an so much, but I know from her way when she spakes about her that it's thruth, your reverence."

"But didn't the *Lianhan Shee*," said one of them, "put a sharp-pointed knife to her breast, wid a divilish intintion of makin' her give the best of atin' an' dhrinkin' the house afforded?"

"She got the victuals, to a sartinty," replied Bartley, "and 'overlooked' my woman for her pains; for she's not the picture of herself since."

Everyone now told some magnified and terrible circumstance illustrating the formidable power of the Lianhan Shee.

When they had finished, the sarcastic lip of the priest curled into an expression of irony and contempt; his brow, which was naturally black and heavy, darkened; and a keen, but rather ferocious-looking eye, shot forth a glance which, while it intimated disdain for those to whom it was directed, spoke also of a dark and troubled spirit in himself. The man seemed to brook with scorn the degrading situation of a religious quack, to which some uncontrollable destiny had doomed him.

"I shall see your wife to-morrow," said he to Bartley; "and after hearing the plain account of what happened, I will consider what is best to be done with this dark, perhaps unhappy, perhaps guilty character; but whether dark, or unhappy, or guilty, I, for one, should not, and will not, avoid her. Go, and bring me word to-morrow evening, when I can see her on the following day. Begone!"

When they withdrew, Father Philip paced his room for some time in silence and anxiety.

"Ay," said he, "wretches! sunk in the grossest superstition and ignorance, and yet, perhaps, happier in your degradation than those who, in the pride of knowledge, can only look back upon a life of crime and misery. What is a sceptic? What is an infidel? Men who, when they will not submit to moral restraint, harden themselves into scepticism and infidelity, until, in the headlong career of guilt, that which was first adopted to lull the outcry of conscience, is supported by the pretended pride of principle. Principle in a sceptic! Hollow and devilish lie! Would *I* have plunged into scepticism had I not first violated the moral sanctions of religion? Never. I became an infidel because I first became a villain! Writhing under a load of

guilt, that which I wished might be true I soon forced myself to think true: and now"—he here clenched his hands and groaned—"now—ay, now—and hereafter—oh, *that* hereafter! Why can I not shake the thoughts of it from my conscience? Religion! Christianity! With all the hardness of an infidel's heart, I feel your truth; because, if every man were the villain that infidelity would make him, then, indeed, might every man curse God for the existence bestowed upon him—as I would, but dare not do. Yet why can I not believe. Alas! why should God accept an unrepentant heart? Am I not a hypocrite, mocking Him by a guilty pretension to His power, and leading the dark into thicker darkness? Then these hands—blood! —broken vows—ha! ha! ha! Well, go—let misery have its laugh, like the light that breaks from the thunder cloud. Prefer Voltaire to Christ; sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind, as I have done—ha! ha! ha! Swim, world—swim about me! I have lost the ways of Providence, and am dark! *She* awaits me: but I broke the chain that galled us: yet it still rankles—still rankles!"

The unhappy man threw himself into a chair in a paroxysm of frenzied agony. For more than an hour he sat in the same posture, until he became gradually hardened into a stiff, lethargic insensibility, callous and impervious to feeling, reason, or religion—an awful transition from a visitation of conscience so terrible as that which he had just suffered. At length he arose, and by walking moodily about, relapsed into his usual gloomy and restless character.

When Bartley went home, he communicated to his wife Father Philip's intention of calling on the following day, to hear a correct account of the *Lianhan Shee.*

"Why, thin," said she, "I'm glad of it, for I intinded myself to go to him, anyway, to get my new scapular consecrated. How-an-ever, as he's to come, I'll get a set of gospels for the boys an' girls, an' he can consecrate all when his hand's in. Aroon, Bartley, they say that man's so holy that he can do anything—ay, melt a body off the face o' the earth, like snow off of a ditch. Dear me, but the power they have is strange, all out!"

"There's no use in gettin' him anything to ate or dhrink," replied Bartley; "he wouldn't take a glass o' whisky once in seven years. Throth, myself thinks he's a little too dhry; sure he might be holy enough, and yet take a sup of an odd time. There's Father Felix, an' though we all know he's far from bein' so blessed a man as he is, yet he has friendship and neighbourliness in him, an' never refuses a glass in rason."

"But do you know what I was tould about Father Philip, Bartley?"

"I'll tell you that afther I hear it, Mary, my woman; you won't expect me to tell what I don't know?—ha! ha! ha!"

"Behave, Bartley, an' quit your jokin' now, at all evints; keep it till we're talkin' of somethin' else, an' don't let us be committin' sin, maybe, while we're spakin' of what we're spakin' about; but they say it's as thrue as the sun to the dial:—the Lint afore last it was—he never tasted mate or dhrink durin' the whole seven weeks! Oh, you

needn't stare! it's well known by thim that has as much sinse as you —no, not so much as you'd carry on the point o' this knittin' needle. Well, sure, the housekeeper an' the two sarvants wondhered—faix, they couldn't do less—an' took it into their heads to watch him closely; an' what do you think—blessed be all the saints above!—what do you think they *seen?*"

"The goodness above knows; for me—I don't."

"Why, thin, whin he was asleep they seen a small silk thread in his mouth that came down through the ceilin' from heaven, and he suckin' it, just as a child would his mother's breast whin the crathur ud be asleep: so that was the way he was supported by the angels! An' I remimber myself, though he's a dark, spare, yallow man at all times, yet he never looked half so fat an' rosy as he did the same Lint!"

"Glory be to heaven! Well, well—*it is* sthrange the power they have! As for him, I'd as *lee* meet St. Pether, or St. Pathrick himself, as him; for one can't but fear him, somehow."

"Fear him! Och, it ud be the pity o' thim that ud do anything to vex or anger that man. Why, his very look ud wither thim, till there wouldn't be the thrack[1] o' thim on the earth; an' as for his curse, why it ud scorch thim to ashes!"

As it was generally known that Father Philip was to visit Mrs. Sullivan the next day, in order to hear an account of the mystery which filled the parish with such fear, a very great number of the parishioners were assembled in and about Bartley's long before he made his appearance. At length he was seen walking slowly down the road, with an open book in his hand, on the pages of which he looked from time to time. When he approached the house those who were standing about it assembled in a body, and, with one consent, uncovered their heads and asked his blessing. His appearance bespoke a mind ill at ease; his face was haggard, and his eyes bloodshot. On seeing the people kneel, he smiled with his usual bitterness, and, shaking his hand with an air of impatience over them, muttered some words, rather in mockery of the ceremony than otherwise. They then rose, and blessing themselves, put on their hats, rubbed the dust off their knees, and appeared to think themselves recruited by a peculiar accession of grace.

On entering the house the same form was repeated; and when it was over, the best chair was placed for him by Mary's own hands, and the fire stirred up, and a line of respect drawn, within which none was to intrude, lest he might feel in any degree incommoded.

"My good neighbour," said he to Mrs. Sullivan, "what strange woman is this, who has thrown the parish into such a ferment! I'm told she paid you a visit? Pray sit down."

"I humbly thank your reverence," said Mary, curtseying lowly, "but I'd rather not sit, sir, if you plase. I hope I know what respect manes, your reverence? Barny Bradagh, I'll thank you to stand up, if you plase, an' his reverence to the fore, Barny."

[1] Track, foot-mark, put for life.

"I ax your reverence's pardon, an' yours, too, Mrs. Sullivan: sure we didn't mane the disrespect, anyhow, sir, plase your reverence."

"About this woman, and the *Lianhan Shee?*" said the priest, without noticing Barny's apology. "Pray what do you precisely understand by a *Lianhan Shee?*"

"Why, sir," replied Mary, "some sthrange bein' from the good people, or fairies, that sticks to some persons. There's a bargain sir, your reverence, made atween thim; an' the divil, sir, that is the ould boy—the saints about us!—has a hand in it. The *Lianhan Shee*, your reverence, is never seen only by thim it keeps wid; but—hem! —it always, wid the help of the ould boy, conthrives, sir, to make the person brake the agreement, an' thin it has *thim* in *its* power; but if they *don't* brake the agreement, thin *it's* in *their* power. If they can get anybody to put in their place, they may get out o' the bargain; for they can, of a sartinty, give oceans o' money to people, but can't take any themselves, plase your reverence. But sure where's the use o' me to be tellin' your reverence what you know betther nor myself?—an' why shouldn't you, or anyone that has the power you have?"

He smiled again at this in his own peculiar manner, and was proceeding to inquire more particularly into the nature of the interview between them, when the noise of feet, and sounds of general alarm, accompanied by a rush of people into the house, arrested his attention, and he hastily inquired into the cause of the commotion. Before he could receive a reply, however, the house was almost crowded; and it was not without considerable difficulty that, by the exertions of Mrs. Sullivan and Bartley, sufficient order and quiet were obtained to hear distinctly what was said.

"Plase your reverence," said several voices at once, "they're comin' hot-foot, into the very house to us! Was ever the likes seen? an' they must know right well, sir, that you're widin it."

"Who are coming?" he inquired.

"Why, the woman, sir, an' her *good pet*, the *Lianhan Shee*, your reverence."

"Well," said he, "but why should you all appear so blanched with terror? Let her come in, and we shall see how far she is capable of injuring her fellow creatures: some maniac," he muttered, in a low soliloquy, "whom the villainy of the world has driven into derangement—some victim to a hand like m—— Well, they say there *is* a Providence, yet such things are permitted?"

"He's sayin' a prayer now," observed one of them; "haven't we a good right to be thankful that he's in the place wid us while she's in it, or dear knows what harm she might do us—maybe *rise* the wind!"

As the latter speaker concluded, there was a dead silence. The persons about the door crushed each other backwards, their feet set out before them, and their shoulders laid with violent pressure against those who stood behind, for each felt anxious to avoid all danger of contact with a being against whose power even a blessed priest found it necessary to guard himself by a prayer.

At length a low murmur ran among the people—"Father O'Rourke!

—here's Father O'Rourke !—he has turned the corner afther her, an' they're both comin' in." Immediately they entered, but it was quite evident, from the manner of the worthy priest, that he was unacquainted with the person of this singular being. When they crossed the threshold, the priest advanced, and expressed his surprise at the throng of people assembled.

"Plase your reverence," said Bartley, "*that's* the woman," nodding significantly towards her as he spoke, but without looking at her person, lest the evil eye he dreaded so much might meet his, and give him "the blast."

The dreaded female, on seeing the house in such a crowded state, started, paused, and glanced with some terror at the persons assembled. Her dress was not altered since her last visit ; but her countenance, though more meagre and emaciated, expressed but little of the unsettled energy which then flashed from her eyes, and distorted her features by the depth of that mysterious excitement by which she had been agitated. Her countenance was still muffled as before, the awful protuberance rose from her shoulders, and the same band which Mrs. Sullivan had alluded to during their interview was bound about the upper part of her forehead.

She had already stood upwards of two minutes, during which the fall of a feather might be heard, yet none bade God bless her—no kind hand was extended to greet her—no heart warmed in affection towards her ; on the contrary, every eye glanced at her, as a being marked with enmity towards God. Blanched faces and knit brows, the signs of fear and hatred, were turned upon her ; her breath was considered pestilential, and her touch paralysis. There she stood, proscribed, avoided, and hunted like a tigress, all fearing to encounter, yet wishing to exterminate her ! Who could she be ?—or what had she done, that the finger of the Almighty marked her out for such a fearful weight of vengeance ?

Father Philip rose and advanced a few steps, until he stood confronting her. His person was tall, his features dark, severe, and solemn : and when the nature of the investigation about to take place is considered, it need not be wondered at that the moment was, to those present, one of deep and impressive interest—such as a visible conflict between a supposed champion of God and a supernatural being was calculated to excite.

"Woman," said he, in his deep, stern voice, "tell me who and what you are, and why you assume a character of such a repulsive and mysterious nature, when it can entail only misery, shame, and persecution on yourself? I conjure you, in the name of Him after whose image you are created, to speak truly !"

He paused, and the tall figure stood mute before him. The silence was dead as death—every breath was hushed—and the persons assembled stood immovable as statues ! Still she spoke not ; but the violent heaving of her breast evinced the internal working of some dreadful struggle. Her face before was pale—it was now ghastly ; her lips became blue, and her eyes vacant.

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"Speak!" said he, "I conjure you in the name of the power by whom you live!"

It is probable that the agitation under which she laboured was produced by the severe effort made to sustain the unexpected trial she had to undergo.

For some minutes her struggle continued; but having begun at its highest pitch, it gradually subsided until it settled in a calmness which appeared fixed and awful as the resolution of despair. With breathless composure she turned round, and put back that part of her dress which concealed her face, except the band on her forehead, which she did not remove; having done this, she turned again, and walked calmly towards Father Philip, with a deadly smile upon her thin lips. When within a step of where he stood, she paused, and riveting her eyes upon him, exclaimed:

"Who and what am I? The victim of infidelity and you, the bearer of a cursed existence, the scoff and scorn of the world, the monument of a broken vow and a guilty life, a being scourged by the scorpion lash of conscience, blasted by periodical insanity, pelted by the winter's storm, scorched by the summer's heat, withered by starvation, hated by man, and touched into my inmost spirit by the anticipated tortures of future misery. I have no rest for the sole of my foot, no repose for a head distracted by the contemplation of a guilty life; I am the unclean spirit which walketh to seek rest and findeth none; I am—*what you made me!* Behold," she added, holding up the bottle, "this failed, and I live to accuse you. But no, you are my husband—though our union was but a guilty form, and I will bury that in silence. You thought me dead, and you flew to avoid punishment—did you avoid it? No; the finger of God has written pain and punishment upon your brow. I have been in all characters, in all shapes, have spoken with the tongue of a peasant, moved in my natural sphere; but my knees were smitten, my brain stricken, and the wild malady which banishes me from society has been upon me for years. Such I am, and such, I say, have you made me. As for you, kind-hearted woman, there was nothing in this bottle but pure water. The interval of reason returned this day, and having remembered glimpses of our conversation I came to apologise to you and to explain the nature of my unhappy distemper, and to beg a little bread, which I have not tasted for two days. I at times conceive myself attended by an evil spirit, shaped out by a guilty conscience, and this is the only familiar which attends me, and by it I have been dogged into madness through every turning of life. Whilst it lasts I am subject to spasms and convulsive starts which are exceedingly painful. The lump on my back is the robe I wore when innocent in my peaceful convent."

The intensity of general interest was now transferred to Father Philip; every face was turned towards him, but he cared not. A solemn stillness yet prevailed among all present. From the moment she spoke, her eye drew his with the power of a basilisk. His pale face became like marble, not a muscle moved; and when she ceased

speaking, his bloodshot eyes were still fixed upon her countenance with a gloomy calmness like that which precedes a tempest. They stood before each other, dreadful counterparts in guilt, for truly his spirit was as dark as hers.

At length he glanced angrily around him.—"Well," said he "what is it now, ye infatuated wretches, to trust in the sanctity *of man?* Learn from me to place the same confidence *in God* which you place in his *guilty creatures*, and you will not lean on a broken reed. Father O'Rourke, you too witness my disgrace, but not my punishment. It is pleasant, no doubt, to have a topic for conversation at your conferences; enjoy it. As for you, Margaret, if society lessen misery, we may be less miserable. But the band of your order and the remembrance of your vow is on your forehead, like the mark of Cain—tear it off, and let it not blast a man who is the victim of prejudice still, nay, of superstition, as well as of guilt; tear it from my sight." His eyes kindled fearfully as he attempted to pull it away by force.

She calmly took it off, and he immediately tore it into pieces, and stamped upon the fragments as he flung them on the ground.

"Come," said the despairing man, "come—there is a shelter for you, *but no peace!*—food, and drink, and raiment, but *no peace!*—NO PEACE!" As he uttered these words, in a voice that rose rapidly to its highest pitch, he took her hand, and they both departed to his own residence.

The amazement and horror of those who were assembled in Bartley's house cannot be described. Our readers may be assured that they deepened in character as they spread through the parish. An undefined fear of this mysterious pair seized upon the people, for their images were associated in their minds with darkness and crime, and supernatural communion. The departing words of Father Philip rang in their ears: they trembled, and devoutly crossed themselves, as fancy again repeated the awful exclamation of the priest—"No peace! no peace!"

When Father Philip and his unhappy associate went home he instantly made her a surrender of his small property; but with difficulty did he command sufficient calmness to accomplish even this. He was distracted—his blood seemed to have been turned to fire—he clenched his hands, and he gnashed his teeth, and exhibited the wildest symptoms of madness. About ten o'clock he desired fuel for a large fire to be brought into the kitchen, and got a strong cord, which he coiled and threw carelessly on the table. The family were then ordered to bed. About eleven they were all asleep; and at the solemn hour of twelve he heaped additional fuel upon the living turf, until the blaze shone with scorching light through the kitchen. Dark and desolating was the tempest within him, as he paced, with agitated steps, before the crackling fire.

"She is risen!" he exclaimed—"the spectre of all my crimes is risen, to haunt me through life! I *am* a murderer—yet she lives, and my guilt is not the less! The stamp of eternal infamy is upon me—

the finger of scorn will mark me out—the tongue of reproach will sting me like that of the serpent—the deadly touch of shame will cover me like a leper—the laws of society will crush the murderer, not the less that his wickedness in blood has miscarried : after that comes the black and terrible tribunal of the Almighty's vengeance—of his fiery indignation ! Hush !—What sounds are those ? They deepen—they deepen ! Is it thunder ? It cannot be the crackling of the blaze ! It *is* thunder !—but it speaks only to *my* ear ! Hush !—Great God, there is a change in my voice ! It is hollow and supernatural ! Could a change have come over me ? Am I living ? Could I have—hah !—Could I have departed ? and am I now at length given over to the worm that never dies ? If it be at my heart I may feel it. God !—I am damned ! Here is a viper twined about my limbs, trying to dart its fangs into my heart ! Hah ! there are feet pacing in the room, too, and I hear voices ! I am surrounded by evil spirits ! Who's there ?—What are you ?—Speak !—They are silent !—There is no answer ! Again comes the thunder ! But perchance this is not my place of punishment, and I will try to leave these horrible spirits !"

He opened the door, and passed out into a small green field that lay behind the house. The night was calm, and the silence profound as death. Not a cloud obscured the heavens ; the light of the moon fell upon the stillness of the scene around him with all the touching beauty of a moonlit midnight in summer. Here he paused a moment, felt his brow, then his heart, the palpitations of which fell audibly upon his ear. He became somewhat cooler ; the images of madness which had swept through his stormy brain disappeared, and were succeeded by a lethargic vacancy of thought which almost deprived him of the consciousness of his own identity. From the green field he descended mechanically to a little glen which opened beside it. It was one of those delightful spots to which the heart clingeth. Its sloping sides were clothed with patches of wood, on the leaves which the moonlight glanced with a soft lustre, rendered more beautiful by their stillness. That side on which the light could not fall lay in deep shadow, which occasionally gave to the rocks and small projecting precipices an appearance of monstrous and unnatural life. Having passed through the tangled mazes of the glen, he at length reached its bottom, along which ran a brook, such as, in the description of the poet—

> "——— In the leafy month of June,
> Unto the sleeping woods all night,
> Singeth a quiet tune."

Here he stood, and looked upon the green winding margin of the streamlet—but its song he heard not. With the terrors of a guilty conscience the beautiful in nature can have no association. He looked up the glen, but its picturesque windings, soft vistas, and wild underwood mingling with grey rocks and taller trees, all mellowed by the moonbeams, had no charms for him. He maintained a profound silence—but it was not the silence of reflection. He endeavoured to

recall the scenes of the past day, but could not bring them back to his memory. Even the fiery tide of thought which, like burning lava, seared his brain a few moments before, was now cold and hardened. He could remember nothing. The convulsion of his mind was over, and his faculties were impotent and collapsed.

In this state he unconsciously retraced his steps, and had again reached the paddock adjoining his house, when, as he thought, the figure of his paramour stood before him. In a moment his former paroxysm returned, and with it the gloomy images of a guilty mind, charged with the extravagant horrors of brain-struck madness.

"What!" he exclaimed, "the band still on your forehead! Tear it off!"

He caught at the form as he spoke, but there was no resistance to his grasp. On looking again towards the spot she had ceased to be visible. The storm within him arose once more: he rushed into the kitchen, where the fire blazed out with fiercer heat; again he imagined that the thunder came to his ears, but the thunderings which he heard were only the voice of conscience. Again his own footsteps and his voice sounded in his fancy as the footsteps and voices of fiends, with which his imagination peopled the room. His state and his existence seemed to him a confused and troubled dream; he tore his hair—threw it on the table—and immediately started back with a hollow groan. His locks, which but a few hours before had been as black as the raven's wing, were now white as snow!

On discovering this he gave a low but frantic laugh. "Ha, ha, ha!" ne exclaimed; "here is another mark—here is food for despair. Silently, but surely, did the hand of God work this, as a proof that I am hopeless! But I will bear it; I will bear the sight! I now feel myself a man blasted by the eye of God himself! Ha, ha, ha! Food for despair! Food for despair!"

Immediately he passed into his own room, and approaching the looking-glass beheld a sight calculated to move a statue. His hair had become literally white, but the shades of his dark complexion, now distorted by terror and madness, flitted, as his features worked under the influence of his tremendous passions, into an expression so frightful that deep fear came over himself. He snatched one of his razors, and fled from the glass to the kitchen. He looked upon the fire, and saw the white ashes lying around its edge.

"Ha!" said he, "the light is come! I see the sign. I am directed and I will follow it. There is yet ONE hope. The immolation! I shall be saved, yet so as by fire. It is for this my hair has become white—the sublime warning for my self-sacrifice! The colour of ashes!—white—white! It is so!—I will sacrifice my body in material fire, to save my soul from that which is eternal! But I had anticipated the SIGN! The self-sacrifice is accepted!"

We must here draw a veil over that which ensued, as the description of it would be both unnatural and revolting. Let it be sufficient to say that the next morning he was burned to a cinder, with the exception of his feet and legs, which remained as monuments of, perhaps,

the most dreadful suicide that ever was committed by man. His razor, too, was found bloody, and several clots of gore were discovered about the hearth; from which circumstances it was plain that he had reduced his strength so much by loss of blood that when he committed himself to the flames he was unable, even had he been willing, to avoid the fiery and awful sacrifice of which he made himself the victim. If anything could deepen the impression of fear and awe already so general among the people, it was the unparalleled nature of his death. Its circumstances are well known in the parish and county wherein it occurred—*for it is no fiction*, gentle reader! and the titular bishop who then presided over the diocese declared that while he lived no person bearing the unhappy man's name should ever be admitted to the clerical order.

The shock produced by his death struck the miserable woman into the darkness of settled derangement. She survived him some years, but wandered about through the province, still, according to the superstitious belief of the people, tormented by the terrible enmity of the *Lianhan Shee.*

As the reader may be disposed to consider the nature of the priest's death an unjustifiable stretch of fiction, I have only to say, in reply, that it is no fiction at all. It is not, I believe, more than forty, or perhaps fifty, years since a priest committed his body to the flames for the purpose of saving his soul by an incrematory sacrifice. The object of a suicide unparalleled in the history of that mad and melancholy crime was ascertained by a letter which he left behind him. There is an old dormant superstition still to be found in Ireland on this very subject. It is believed by some that a priest guilty of great crimes possesses the privilege of securing salvation by self-sacrifice. We have heard two or three legends among the people in which this principle predominated. The outlines of one of these, called "The Young Priest and Brian Braar," were as follows:—

A young priest on his way to the College of Valladolid, in Spain, was benighted, but found a lodging in a small inn on the road-side. Here he was tempted by a young maiden of great beauty, who, in the moment of his weakness, extorted from him a bond signed with his blood, binding himself to her for ever. She turned out to be an evil spirit; and the young priest proceeded to Valladolid with a heavy heart, confessed his crime to the superior, who sent him to the Pope, who sent him to a friar in the county of Armagh, called Brian Braar, who sent him to the devil. The devil, on the strength of Brian Braar's letter, gave him a warm reception, held a cabinet council immediately, and laid the despatch before his colleagues, who agreed that the claimant should get back his bond from the brimstone lady who had inveigled him. She, however, obstinately refused to surrender it, and stood upon her bond, until threatened with being thrown three times into Brian Braar's furnace. This tamed her: the man got his bond, and returned to Brian Braar on earth. Now Brian Braar had for three years past abandoned God, and taken to the study of magic with the devil; a circumstance which accounts for his influence below. The young priest, having possessed himself of his bond, went to Lough Derg to wash away his sins; and Brian Braar having also become penitent, the two worthies accompanied each other to the lake. On entering the boat, however, to cross over to the island, such a storm arose as drove them back. Brian assured his companion that he himself was the cause of it.

"There is now," said he, "but one more chance for *me*, and we must have recourse to it."

He then returned homewards, and both had reached a hill-side near Brian's house, when the latter desired the young priest to remain there a few minutes, and he would return to him; which he did with a hatchet in his hand.

"Now," said he, "you must cut me into four quarters, and mince my body into small bits, then cast them into the air, and let them go with the wind."

The priest, by much entreaty, complied with his wishes, and returned to Lough Derg, where he lived twelve years upon one meal of bread and water *per diem*. Having now purified himself, he returned home; but on passing the hill where he had minced the Friar, he was astonished to see the same man celebrating mass attended by a very penitential looking congregation of spirits.

"Ah," said Brian Braar, when mass was over, "you are now a happy man. With regard to my state, *for the voluntary sacrifice I have made of myself, I am to be saved;* but I must remain on this mountain until the Day of Judgment." So saying, he disappeared.

There is little to be said about the superstition of the *Lianhan Shee*, except that it existed as we have drawn it, and that it is now fading fast away. There is also something appropriate in associating the heroine of this little story with the being called the *Lianhan Shee*, because, setting the superstition aside, any female who fell into her crime was called *Lianhan Shee*. *Lianhan Shee an Sagarth* signifies a priest's paramour, or, as the country people say, "Miss." Both terms have now nearly become obsolete.

TRAITS AND STORIES

OF

THE IRISH PEASANTRY.

THIRD SERIES.

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THE GEOGRAPHY OF AN IRISH OATH.

PETER CONNELL was for many years of his life a pattern and a proverb for industry and sobriety. He first began the world as keeper of a shebeen-house at the cross-roads, about four miles from the town of Ballypoteen. He was decidedly an honest man to his neighbours, but a knave to excisemen, whom he hated by a kind of instinct that he had, which prompted him, in order to satisfy his conscience, to render them every practicable injury within the compass of his ingenuity. Shebeen-house keepers and excisemen have been, time out of mind, destructive of each other; the exciseman pouncing like a beast or bird of prey upon the shebeen man and his illicit spirits; the shebeen man staving in the exciseman, like a barrel of doublings, by a knock from behind a hedge, which sometimes sent him to that world which is emphatically called the world of spirits. For this, it sometimes happened that the sheebeen man was hanged; but as his death only multiplied that of the excisemen in a geometrical ratio, the sharp-scented fraternity resolved, if possible, not to risk their lives either by exposing themselves to the necessity of travelling by night or prosecuting by day. In this they acted wisely and prudently: fewer of the unfortunate peasantry were shot in their encounters with the yeomanry or military on such occasions, and the retaliations became by degrees less frequent, until, at length, the murder of a gauger became a rare occurrence in the country.

Peter, before his marriage, had wrought as labouring servant to a man who kept two or three private stills in those caverns among the remote mountains to which the gauger never thought of penetrating, because he supposed that no human enterprise would have ever dreamt of advancing farther into them than appeared to *him* to be practicable. In this he was frequently mistaken; for though the still-house was in many cases inaccessible to horses, yet by the contrivance of *slipes*—a kind of sledge—a dozen men could draw a couple

of sacks of barley with less trouble, and at a quicker pace, than if horses only had been employed. By this, and many other similar contrivances, the peasantry were often able to carry on the work of private distillation in places so distant that few persons could suspect them as likely to be chosen for such purposes. The uncommon personal strength, the daring spirit and great adroitness of Peter Connell rendered him a very valuable acquisition to his master in the course of his illicit occupations. Peter was, in addition to his other qualities, sober and ready-witted, so that whenever the gauger made his appearance, his expedients to baffle him were often inimitable. Those expedients did not, however, always arise from the exigency of the moment; they were often deliberately, and with much exertion of ingenuity, planned by the proprietors and friends of such establishments, perhaps for weeks before the gauger's visit occurred. But, on the other hand, as the gauger's object was to take them, if possible, by surprise, it frequently happened that his appearance was as unexpected as it was unwelcome. It was *then* that the prompt ingenuity of the people was fully seen, felt and understood by the baffled exciseman, who too often had just grounds for bitterly cursing their talent at outwitting him.

Peter served his master as a kind of superintendent in such places, until he gained the full knowledge of distilling, according to the processes used by the most popular adepts in the art. Having acquired this, he set up as a professor, and had excellent business. In the meantime, he had put together by degrees a small purse of money, to the amount of about twenty guineas, no inconsiderable sum for a young Irishman who intends to begin the world on his own account. He accordingly married, and as the influence of a wife is usually not to be controlled during the honeymoon, Mrs. Connell prevailed on Peter to relinquish his trade of distiller, and to embrace some other mode of life that might not render their living so much asunder necessary. Peter suffered himself to be prevailed upon, and promised to have nothing more to do with private distillation as a distiller. One of the greatest curses attending this lawless business is the idle and irregular habit of life which it gradually induces. Peter could not now relish the labour of an agriculturist, to which he had been bred; and yet he was too prudent to sit down and draw his own and his wife's support from so exhaustible a source as twenty guineas. Two or three days passed, during which "he cudgelled his brains," to use his own subsequent expression, in plans for future subsistence; two or three consultations were held with Ellish, in which their heads were laid together, and, as it was still the honeymoon, the subject-matter of the consultation, of course, was completely forgotten. Before the expiration of a second month, however, they were able to think of many other things, in addition to the fondlings and endearments of a new-married couple. Peter was every day becoming more his own man, and Ellish by degrees more her own woman. "The purple light of love," which had changed Peter's red head into a rich auburn, and his swivel eye into a knowing wink—exceedingly irresistible in his

bachelorship, as he made her believe, to the country girls—had passed away, taking the aforesaid auburn along with it, and leaving nothing but the genuine carrot behind. Peter, too, on opening his eyes one morning about the beginning of the third month, perceived that his wife was, after all, nothing more than a thumping red-cheeked wench, with good eyes, a mouth rather large, and a nose very much resembling, in its curve, the seat of a saddle, allowing the top to correspond with the pommel.

"Pether," said she, "it's like a dhrame to me that you're neglectin' your business, alanna."

"Is it, you beauty? but, maybe, you'd first point out to me what business, barrin' buttherin' up yourself, I have to mind, you phanix bright?"

"Quit yourself, Pether! it's time for you to give up your ould ways; you caught one bird wid them, an' that's enough. What do you intind to do? It's full time for you to be lookin' about you."

"Lookin' about me! What do you mane, Ellish?"

"The dickens a bit o' me thought of it," replied the wife, laughing at the unintentional allusion to the circumspect character of Peter's eyes—"upon my faix, I didn't—ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, thin, but you're full o' your fun, sure enough, if that's what you're at. Maybe, avourneen, if I had looked right afore me, as I ought to do, it's Katty Murray an' her snug farm I'd have, instead of ——"

Peter hesitated. The rapid feelings of a woman, and an Irishwoman, quick and tender, had come forth and subdued him. She had *not* voluntarily alluded to his eyes; but on seeing Peter offended, she immediately expressed that sorrow and submission which are most powerful when accompanied by innocence, and when meekly assumed to pacify rather than to convince. A tear started to her eye, and with a voice melted into unaffected tenderness, she addressed him, but he scarcely gave her time to speak.

"No, avourneen, no; I won't say what I was goin' to mintion. I won't indeed, Ellish, dear; an' forgive me for voundin' your feelins, *alanna dhas*. Hell resave her an' her farm! I dunna what put her into my head at all; but I thought you wor jokin' me about my eyes: an' sure if you war, acushla, that's no rason that I'd not allow you to do that and more wid your own Pether. Give me a *slewsther*,[1] agrah —a sweet one, now!"

He then laid his mouth to hers, and immediately a sound, nearly resembling a pistol-shot, was heard through every part of the house. It was, in fact, a kiss upon a scale of such magnitude and magnificence that the Emperor of Morocco might not blush to be charged with it. A reconciliation took place, and in due time it was determined that Peter, as he understood poteen, should open a shebeen-house.

The moment this resolution was made, the wife kept coaxing him until he took a small house at the cross-roads before alluded to,

[1] A kiss of fondness.

where, in the course of a short time, he was established, if not in his line, yet in a mode of life approximating to it as nearly as the inclination of Ellish would permit. The cabin which they occupied had a kitchen in the middle, and a room at each end of it, in one of which was their own humble chaff bed, with its blue quilted drugget cover; in the other stood a couple of small tables, some stools, a short form, and one chair, being a present from his father-in-law. These constituted Peter's whole establishment, so far as it defied the gauger. To this we must add a five-gallon keg of spirits hid in the garden and a roll of smuggled tobacco. From the former he bottled, over night, as much as was usually drunk the following day; and from the tobacco, which was also kept underground, he cut, with the same caution, as much as to-morrow's exigencies might require. This he kept in his coat-pocket, a place where the gauger would never think of searching for it, divided into halfpenny and penny worths, ounces, or half-ounces, according as it might be required; and, as he had it without duty, the liberal spirit in which he dealt it out to his neighbours soon brought him a large increase of custom.

Peter's wife was an excellent manager, and he himself a pleasant, good-humoured man, full of whim and inoffensive mirth. His powers of amusement were of a high order, considering his station in life and his want of education. These qualities contributed, in a great degree, to bring both the young and the old to his house during the long winter nights, in order to hear the fine racy humour with which he related his frequent adventures and battles with excisemen. In the summer evenings he usually engaged a piper or fiddler, and had a dance, a contrivance by which he not only rendered himself popular, but increased his business.

In this mode of life the greatest source of anxiety to Peter and Ellish was the difficulty of not offending their friends by refusing to give them credit. Many plans were, with great skill and forethought, devised to obviate this evil; but all failed. A short board was first procured, on which they got written with chalk—

"No credit giv'n—barrin' a thrifle to Pether's friends."

Before a week passed after this intimation, the number of "Pether's friends" increased so rapidly that neither he nor Ellish knew the half of them. Every scamp in the parish was hand and glove with him: the drinking tribe, particularly, became desperately attached to him and Ellish. Peter was naturally kind-hearted, and found that his firmest resolutions too often gave way before the open flattery with which he was assailed. He then changed his hand, and left Ellish to bear the brunt of their blarney. Whenever any person or persons were seen approaching the house, Peter, if he had reason to expect an attack upon his indulgence, prepared himself for a retreat. He kept his eye to the window, and if they turned from the direct line of the road, he immediately slipped into bed, and lay close, in order to escape them. In the meantime they enter.

"God save all here! Ellish, agra machree, how are you?"

"God save you kindly! Faix, I'm middlin', I thank you, Condy: how is yourself, an' all at home?"

"Devil a heartier, barrin' my father, that's touched wid a loss of appetite afther his meals—ha, ha, ha!"

"Musha, the dicken's be an you, Conny, but you're your father's son, anyway; the best company in Europe is the same man. Throth, whether you're jokin' or not, I'd be sarry to hear of anything to his disadvantage, dacent man. Boys, won't yees go down to the other room?"

"Go way wid yees, boys, till I spake to Ellish here about the affairs o' the nation. Why, Ellish, you stand the cut all to pieces. By the contints o' the book, you do; Pether doesn't stand it half so well. How is he, the thief?"

"Throth, he's not well to-day, in regard of a smotherin' about the heart he tuck this morning' afther his breakfast. He jist laid himself on the bed a while, to see if it would go off of him—God be praised for all his marcies!"

"Thin, upon my *solev*ation, I'm sorry to hear it, and so will all at home, for there's not in the parish we're sittin' in a couple that our family has a greater regard an' friendship for than him an' yourself. Faix, my modher, no longer ago than Friday night last, argued down Bartle Meegan's throath that you and Biddy Martin war the two portliest weemen that comes into the chapel. God forgive myself, I was near quarrellin' wid Bartle, on the head of it, bekase I tuck my modher's part, as I had good right to do."

"Thrath, I'm thankful to you both, Condy, for your kindness."

"Oh, the sarra taste o' kindness was in it all, Ellish, 'twas only the truth; an' as long as I live I'll stand up for that."

"Arrah, how is your aunt down at Carntall?"

"Indeed, thin, but middlin', not gettin' her health: she'll soon give the crow a puddin', anyway; thin, Ellish, you thief, I'm *in* for the yallow boys. Do you know thim that came in wid me?"

"Why, thin, I can't say I do. Who are they, Condy?"

"Why, one o' thim's a bachelor to my sisther Norah, a very dacent boy, indeed—him wid the frieze jock upon him, an' the buckskin breeches. The other three's from Teenabraighera beyant. They're related to my brother-in-law, Mick Dillon, by his first wife's brother-in-law's uncle. They're come to this neighbourhood till the 'Sizes, bad luck to them, goes over; for, you see, they're in a little throuble."

"The Lord grant them safe out of it, poor boys!"

"I brought them up here to treat them, poor fellows; an' Ellish, avourneen, you must credit me for whatsomever we may have. The thruth is, you see, that when we left home none of us had any notion of dhrinkin', or I'd a put a something in my pocket, so that I'm taken at an average.—Bud-an'-age—how is little Dan? Sowl, Ellish, that goor-soon, when he grows up, will be a credit to you. I don't think there's a finer child in Europe of his age, so there isn't."

"Indeed, he's a good child, Condy. But, Condy, avick, about givin' credit:—by thim five crasses, if I could give score to any boy

in the parish, it ud be to yourself. It was only last night that I made a promise against doin' sich a thing for man or mortual. We're a'most broken an' harrish'd out o' house an' home by it; an what's more, Condy, we intend to give up the business. The landlord's at us every day for his rint, an' we owe for the two last kegs we got, but hasn't a rap to meet aither o' thim; an' enough due to us if we could get it together: an' whisper, Condy, atween ourselves, that's what ails Pether, although he doesn't wish to let an to anyone about it."

"Well, but you know I'm safe, Ellish?"

"I know you are, avourneen, as the bank itself; an' should have what you want wid a heart an' a half, only for the promise I made an my two knees last night aginst givin' credit to man or woman. Why the dickens didn't you come yistherday?"

"Didn't I tell you, woman alive, that it was by accident, an' that I wished to sarve the house, that we came at all. Come, come, Ellish; don't disgrace me afore my sisther's bachelor an' the sthrange boys that's to the fore. By this staff in my hand, I wouldn't for the best cow in our byre be put to the blush afore thim; an' besides, there's a *cleeveenship* atween your family an' ours."

"Condy, avourneen, say no more: if you were fed from the same breast wid me, I couldn't, nor wouldn't break my promise. I wouldn't have the sin of it an me for the wealth o' the three kingdoms."

"Bedad, you're a quare woman; an' only that my regard for you is great entirely, we would be two, Ellish; but I know you're dacent still."

He then left her, and joined his friends in the little room that was appropriated for drinking, where, with a great deal of mirth, he related the failure of the plan they had formed for outwitting Peter and Ellish.

"Boys," said he, "she's too many for us! St. Pether himself wouldn't make a hand of her. Faix, she's a cute one. I palavered her at the rate of a hunt, an' she ped me back in my own coin, wid dacent interest—but no whisky!—Now to take a rise out o' Pether. Jist sit where yees are, till I come back."

He then left them enjoying the intended "spree," and went back to Ellish.

"Well I'm sure, Ellish, if anyone had tuck their book oath that you'd refuse my father's son sich a thrifle, I wouldn't believe them. It's not wid Pether's knowledge you do it, I'll be bound. But bad as you thrated us, sure we must see how the poor fellow is, at any rate."

As he spoke, and before Ellish had time to prevent him, he pressed into the room where Peter lay.

"Why, tare alive, Pether, is it in bed you are, at this hour o' the day?"

"Eh? What's that—who's that? Oh!"

"Why, thin, the sarra lie undher you, is that the way wid you?"

"Oh!—oh! Eh? Is that Condy?"

"All that's to the fore of him. What's asthray wid you, man alive?"

"Throth, Condy, I don't know rightly. I went out, wantin' my coat, about a week ago, an' got cowld in the small o' the back: I've a pain in it ever since. Be sittin'."

"Is your *heart* safe? You have no smotherin' or anything upon *it?*

"Why, thin, thank goodness, no; it's all about my back an' my hinches."

"Divil'a thing it is but a complaint they call an *allovernes* ails you, you shkaimer o' the world wide. 'Tis the oil o' the hazel, or a rubbin' down wid an oak towel, you want. Get up, I say, or, by this an' by that, I'll flail you widin an inch o' your life."

"Is it beside yourself you are, Condy?"

"No, no, faix; I've found you out: Ellish is afther tellin' me that it was a smotherin' on the heart; but it's a pain in the small o' the back wid *yourself*. Oh, you born desaver! Get up, I say agin, afore I take the stick to you!"

"Why, thin, all sorts o' fortune to you, Condy—ha, ha, ha!—but you're the sarra's pet, for there's no escapin' you. What was that I hard atween you an' Ellish?" said Peter, getting up.

"The sarra matther to you. If you behave yourself, we may let you into the wrong side o' the sacret afore you die. Go an' get us a pint o' what you know," replied Condy, as he and Peter entered the kitchen.

"Ellish," said Peter, "I suppose you must give it to thim. Give it—give it, avourneen. Now, Condy, whin 'll you pay me for this?"

"Never fret yourself about that; you'll be ped. Honour *bright*, as the black said whin he stole the boots."

"Now, Pether," said the wife, "sure it's no use axin me to give it, afther the promise I made last night. Give it yourself; for me, I'll have no hand in sich things, good or bad. I hope we'll soon get out of it altogether, for myself's sick an' sore of it, dear knows!"

Peter accordingly furnished them with the liquor, and got a promise that Condy would certainly pay him at mass on the following Sunday, which was only three days distant. The fun of the boys was exuberant at Condy's success: they drank, and laughed, and sang, until pint after pint followed in rapid succession.

Every additional inroad upon the keg brought a fresh groan from Ellish; and even Peter himself began to look blank as their potations deepened. When the night was far advanced they departed, after having first overwhelmed Ellish with professions of the warmest friendship, promising that in future she exclusively should reap whatever benefit was to be derived from their patronage.

In the meantime Condy forgot to perform his promise. The next Sunday passed, but Peter was not paid, nor was his clever debtor seen at mass, or in the vicinity of the shebeen-house, for many a month afterwards—an instance of ingratitude which mortified his creditor extremely. The latter, who felt that it was a *take in*, resolved to cut short all hopes of obtaining credit from them in future. In about a week after the foregoing hoax he got up a board, presenting a more vigorous refusal of *score* than the former. His friends, who were more

in number than he could possibly have imagined, on this occasion were altogether wiped out of the exception. The notice ran to the following effect :—

"Notice to the Public, *and to Pether Connel's frends in partikular*—Devil resave the morsel of credit will be got or given in this house, while there is stick or stone of it together, barrin' them that axes it has the *ready money*.

"PETHER × CONNELL, his mark.
"ELLISH × CONNELL, her mark."

This regulation, considering everything, was a very proper one. It occasioned much mirth among Peter's customers ; but Peter cared little about that, provided he made the money.

The progress of his prosperity, dating it from so small a beginning, was certainly slow. He owed it principally to the careful habits of Ellish and his own sobriety. He was prudent enough to avoid placing any sign in his window by which his house could be known as *a shebeen ;* for he was not ignorant that there is no class of men more learned in this species of hieroglyphics than excisemen. At all events, he was prepared for them, had they come to examine his premises. Nothing that could bring him within the law was ever kept visible. The cask that contained the poteen was seldom a week in the same place of concealment, which was mostly, as we have said, underground. The tobacco was weighed and subdivided into small quantities, which, in addition to what he carried in his pocket, were distributed in various crevices and crannies of the house ; sometimes under the thatch, sometimes under a dish on the dresser, but generally in a damp place.

When they had been about two or three years thus employed, Peter, at the solicitation of the wife, took a small farm.

"You're stout an' able," said she : "an' as I can manage the house widout you, wouldn't it be a good plan to take a bit o' ground—nine or ten acres, suppose—an' thry your hand at it? Sure you war wanst the greatest man in the parish about a farm. Surely that ud be dacenter nor to be *slungein'* about, intin' truth and lies for other people, whin they're at their work, to make thim laugh, an' you doin' nothin' but standin' over thim, wid your hands down to the bottom o' your pockets? Do, Pether, thry it, avick, an' you'll see it 'll prosper wid us, plase God."

"Faix, I'm ladin' an asier life, Ellish."

"But are you ladin' a dacenter or a more becominer life?"

"Why, I think, widout doubt, that it's more becominer to walk about like a gintleman nor to be workin' like a slave."

"Gintleman ! Musha, is it to the fair you're bringin' yourself? Why, you great big bosthoon, isn't it both a sin an' a shame to see you sailin' about among the neighbours, like a shtray turkey, widout a hand's turn to do? But, anyway, take my advice, a villish,—will you, aroon?—an' faix you'll see how rich we'll get, wid a blessin'?"

"Ellish, you're a deludher !"

"Well, an' what suppose? To be sure I am. Usen't you be followin'

me, like a calf afther the finger?—ha, ha, ha!—Will you do my biddin', Pether darlin'?"

Peter gave her a shrewd, significant wink, in contradiction to what he considered the degrading comparison she had just made.

"Ellish, you're beside the mark, you beauty; always put the saddle on the right horse, woman alive! Didn't you often an' often swear to me, apon two green ribbons acrass one another, that you liked a red head best, and that the redder it was you liked it the betther."

"An' it was thruth, too; an' sure, by the same a token, where could I get one half so red as your own? Faix, I knew what I was about! I wouldn't give you yet for e'er a young man in the parish, if I was a widow to-morrow. Will you take the land?"

"So thin, afther all, if the head hadn't been an me, I wouldn't be a favourite wid you?—ha, ha, ha!"

"Get out wid you, an' spake sinse. Throth, if you don't say aither ay or no, I'll give myself no more bother about it. There we are now wid some guineas together, an'——Faix, Pether, you're vexin' me!"

"Do you want an answer?"

"Why, if it's plasin' to *your honour*, I'd have no objection."

"Well, will you have my new big coat made agin *Shraft?*"[1]

"Ay, will I, in case you do what I say; but if you don't, the sarra stitch of it 'll go to your back this twelvemonth, maybe, if you vex me. Now!"

"Well, I'll tell you what: my mind's made up—I *will* take the land; an' I'll show the neighbours what Pether Connell can do yit."

"Augh! augh! mavourneen, that you wor! Throth, I'll fry a bit o' the bacon for our dinner to-day, on the head o' that, although I didn't intind to touch it till Sunday. Ay, faix, an' a pair o' stockins, too, along wid the coat; an' somethin' else, that you didn't hear of yit!"

Ellish, in fact, was a perfect mistress of the science of wheedling; but as it appears instinctive in the sex, it is not to be wondered at. Peter himself was easy, or rather indolent, till properly excited by the influence of adequate motives; but no sooner were the energies that slumbered in him called into activity than he displayed a firmness of purpose, and a perseverance in action, that amply repaid his exertions.

The first thing he did, after taking his little farm, was to prepare for its proper cultivation and to stock it. His funds were not, however, sufficient for this at the time. A horse was to be bought, but the last guinea they could spare had been already expended, and this purchase was, therefore, out of the question. The usages of the small farmers, however, enabled him to remedy this inconvenience. Peter made a bargain with a neighbour, in which he undertook to repay him, by an exchange of labour, for the use of his plough and horses in getting down his crop. He engaged to give him, for a stated period in the slack season, so many days' mowing as would cover the expenses of

[1] Shrovetide.

ploughing and harrowing his land. There was, however, a consider able portion of his holding potato-ground : this Peter himself dug with his spade, breaking it as he went along into fine mould. He then sowed the seed—got a hatchet, and selecting the best thorn-bush he could find, cut it down—tied a rope to the trunk, seized the rope, and in this manner harrowed his potato-ground. Thus did he proceed, struggling to overcome difficulties by skill, and substituting for the more efficient modes of husbandry such rude artificial resources as his want of capital compelled him to adopt.

In the meantime, Ellish, seeing Peter acquitting himself in his undertaking with such credit, determined not to be outdone in her own department. She accordingly conceived the design of extending her business, and widening the sphere of her exertions. This intention, however, she kept secret from Peter, until, by putting penny to penny, and shilling to shilling, she was able to purchase a load of crockery. Here was a new source of profit opened exclusively by her own address. Peter was astonished when he saw the car unloaded, and the crockery piled in proud array by Ellish's own hands.

"I knew," said she, "I'd take a start out o' you. Faix, Pether, you'll see how I'll do, never fear, wid the help o' Heaven ! I'll be off to the market in the mornin', plase God, where I'll sell rings round me o' them crocks an' pitchers. An' now, Pether, the sarra one o' me would do this, good or bad, only bekase you're managin' the farm so cleverly. Tady Gormley's goin' to bring home his meal from the mill, and has promised to lave these in the market for me, an' never fear but I'll get some o' the neighbours to bring them home, so that there's cart-hire saved. Faix, Pether, there's nothin' like givin' the people sweet words, anyway ; sure they come chape."

"Faith, an' I'll back you for the sweet words agin any woman in the three kingdoms, Ellish, you darlin'. But don't you know the proverb—'Sweet words butther no parsnips'?"

"In throth the same proverb's a lying one, and ever was ; but it's not parsnips I'll butther wid 'em, you gommoch."

"Sowl, you butthered me wid 'em long enough, you deludher—devil a lie in it ; but thin, as you say, sure enough, I was no parsnip—not so soft as that aither, you phanix !"

"No? Thin I sildom seen your beautiful head widout thinkin' of a carrot, an' it's well known they're related—ha, ha, ha !—Behave, Pether—behave, I say—Pether, Pether—ha, ha, ha !—let me alone ! Katty Hacket, take him away from me—ha, ha, ha !"

"Will ever you, you shaver wid the tongue that you are? Will ever you, I say? Will ever you make delusion to my head agin—eh?"

"Oh, never, never—but let me go, an' me so full o' tickles ! Oh, Pether, avourneen, don't, you'll hurt me, an' me the way I'm in—quit, a villish !"

"Bedad, if you don't let my head alone, I'll—will ever you?"

"Never, never. There now—ha, ha, ha !—oh, but I'm as wake as wather wid what I laughed. Well, now, Pether, didn't I manage bravely—didn't I?"

"Wait till we see the profits first, Ellish—crockery's very tindher goods."

"Ay !—jist wait, an' I'll engage I'll turn the penny. The family's risin' wid us —— "

"Very thrue," replied Peter, giving a sly wink at the wife—"no doubt of it."

"——Risin' wid us—I tell you to have sinse, Pether ;—an' it's our duty to have something for the crathurs when they grow up."

"Well, that's thruth—sure I'm not sayin' against it."

"I know that ; but what I say is, if we hould an we may make money. Everything, for so far, has thruv wid us, God be praised for it. There's another thing in my mind, that I'll be tellin' you some o' these days."

"I believe, Ellish, you dhrame about makin' money."

"Well, an' I might do worse ; when I'm dhramin' about it, I'm doin' no sin to anyone. But listen, you must keep the house to-morrow while I'm at the market. Won't you, Pether ?"

"An' who's to open the dhrain in the bottom below ?"

"That can be done the day afther. Won't you, abouchal ?"

"Ellish, you're a deludher, I tell you. Sweet words—sowl, you'a smooth a furze bush wid sweet words. How-an'-ever, I *will* keep the house to-morrow, till we see the great things you'll do wid your crockery."

Ellish's success was, to say the least of it, quite equal to her expectations. She was certainly an excellent wife, full of acuteness, industry, and enterprise. Had Peter been married to a woman of a disposition resembling his own, it is probable that he would have sunk into indolence, filth, and poverty. These miseries might have soured their tempers, and driven them into all the low excesses and crimes attendant upon pauperism. Ellish, however, had sufficient spirit to act upon Peter's natural indolence so as to excite it to the proper pitch. Her mode of operation was judiciously suited to his temper. Playfulness and kindness were the instruments by which she managed him. She knew that violence, or the assumption of authority, would cause a man who, like him, was stern when provoked, to re-act and meet her with an assertion of his rights and authority not to be trifled with. This she consequently avoided, not entirely from any train of reasoning on the subject, but from that intuitive penetration which taught her to know that the plan she had resorted to was best calculated to make him subservient to her own purposes without causing him to feel that he was governed.

Indeed, every day brought out her natural cleverness more clearly. Her intercourse with the world afforded her that facility of understanding the tempers and dispositions of others which can never be acquired when it has not been bestowed as a natural gift. In her hands it was a valuable one. By degrees her house improved in its appearance, both inside and outside. From crockery she proceeded to herrings, then to salt, in each of which she dealt with surprising success. There was, too, such an air of bustle, activity, and good-

humour about her that people loved to deal with her. Her appearance was striking, if not grotesque. She was tall and strong, walked rapidly, and when engaged in fair or market, disposing of her coarse merchandise, was dressed in a short red petticoat, blue stockings, strong brogues, wore a blue cloak, with the hood turned up over her head, on the top of which was a man's hat fastened by a ribbon under her chin. As she thus stirred about, with a kind word and a joke for everyone, her healthy cheek in full bloom, and her blue-grey eye beaming with an expression of fun and good-nature, it would be difficult to conceive a character more adapted for intercourse with a laughter-loving people. In fact, she soon became a favourite, and this not the less that she was as ready to meet her rivals in business with a blow as with a joke. Peter witnessed her success with unfeigned pleasure ; and although every feasible speculation was proposed by her, yet he never felt that he was a mere nonentity when compared to his wife. 'Tis true he was perfectly capable of executing her agricultural plans when she proposed them, but his own capacity for making a lucky hit was very limited. Of the two she was certainly the better farmer ; and scarcely an improvement took place in his little holding which might not be traced to Ellish.

In the course of a couple of years she bought him a horse, and Peter was enabled to join a neighbour who had another. Each had a plough and tackle, so that here was a little team made up, the half of which belonged to Peter. By this means they ploughed week about, until their crops were got down. Peter, finding his farm doing well, began to feel a kind of rivalship with his wife—that is to say, she first suggested the principle, and afterwards contrived to make him imagine that it was originally his own.

"The sarra one o' you, Pether," she exclaimed to him one day, "but's batin' me out an' out. Why, you're the very dickens at the farmin', so you are. Faix, I suppose, if you go an this way much longer, that you'll be thinkin' of another farm, in regard that we have some guineas together. Pether, did you ever think of it, abouchal?"

"To be sure I did, you beauty ; an' amn't I in fifty notions to take Harry Neal's land, that jist lies alongside of our own?"

"Faix, an' you're right, maybe ; but if it's sthrivin' agin me you are, you may give it over : I tell you I'll have more money made afore this time twelvemonth than you will."

"Arrah, is it jokin' you are? More money? Would you advise me to take Harry's land? Tell me *that* first, you phanix, an' thin I'm your man!"

"Faix, take your own coorse, avourneen. If you get a lase of it at a fair rint, I'll buy another horse, anyhow. Isn't that doin' the thing dacent?"

"More power to you, Ellish! I'll hould you a crown I pay you the price o' the horse afore this time twelvemonth."

"Done! The sarra be off me but done!—an' here's Barny Dillon an' Katty Hacket to bear witness."

"Sure enough we will," said Barny, the servant.

"I'll back the misthress any money," replied the maid.

"Two to one on the masther," said the man. "Whoo! our side o' the house for ever! Come, Pether, hould up your head, there's money bid for you."

"Ellish, I'll fight for you ankle-deep," said Katty, "depend your life an me."

"In the name o' goodness, thin, it's a bargain," said Ellish; "an' at the end o' the year, if we're spared, we'll see what we'll see. We'll have among ourselves a little sup o' tay, plase goodness, an' we'll be comfortable. Now, Barny, go an' draw home thim phaties from the pits while the day's fine; and, Katty, a colleen, bring in some wather, till we get the pig killed and scalded—it'll hardly have time to be good bacon for the big markets at Christmas. I don't wish," she continued, "to keep it back from them that we have a thrifle o' money. One always does betther when it's known that they're not strugglin'. There's Nelly Cummins, an' her customers is lavin' her, an' dalin' wid me, bekase she's goin' down in business. Ay, an' Pether, a hagur, it's the way o' the world!"

"Well, but, Ellish, don't you be givin' Nelly Cummins the harsh word, or lanin' too heavily upon her, the crathur, merely in regard that she *is* goin' down. Do you hear, a colleen?"

"Indeed I don't do it, Pether; but you know she has a tongue like a razor at times, and whin it gets loose she'd provoke St. Pether himself. Thin she's takin' to the dhrink, too, the poor misfortunate vagabone!"

"Well, well, that's no affair o' yours, or mine aither—only don't be risin' ructions and norrations wid her. You *threwn* a jug at her the last day you war out, an' hot the poor ould potticary as he was passin'. You see I hard that, though you kept it close from me!—ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!—why you'd split if you had seen the crathur whin he fell into Pether White's brogue-creels, wid his heels up. But what right had she to be sthrivin' to bring away my customers afore my face? Ailey Dogherty was buyin' a crock wid me, an' Nelly shouts over to her from where she sot like a prince on her stool, 'Ailey,' says she, 'here's a betther one for three fardens less, an' another farden 'ill get you a penn'orth o' salt.' An', indeed, Ailey walks over, manely enough, an' tuck her at her word. Why, flesh an' blood couldn't bear it!"

"Indeed, an' you're raal flesh an' blood, Ellish, if that bes thrue."

"Well, but consarnin' what I mintioned awhile agone—hut! the poor mad crathur, let us have no more discoorse about her—I say, that no one ever thrives so well as when the world sees that they are gettin' an, an' prosperin'; but if there's not an appearance, how will anyone know whether we are prosperin' or not, barrin' they see some sign of it about us; I mane, in a quiet rasonable way, widout show or extravagance. In the name o' goodness, thin, let us get the house brushed up, an' the outhouses dashed. A bushel or two of lime 'ill make this as white as an egg widin, an' a very small expinse will get it plastered an' whitewashed widout. Wouldn't you like it, avourneen? Eh, Pether?"

"To be sure I'd like it. It'll give a respectful look to the house an' place."

"Ay, an' it'll bring customers, that's the main thing. People always like to come to a snug, comfortable place. An', plase God, I'm thinkin' of another plan that I'll soon mintion."

"An' what may that be, you skamer? Why, Ellish, you've ever an' always some skame or other in that head o' yours. For my part, I don't know how you get at them."

"Well, no matter, acushla, do you only back me; jist show me how I ought to go an wid them, for nobody can outdo you at sich things, an' I'll engage we'll thrive yit, always wid a blessin' an us."

"Why, to tell God's thruth, I'd bate the devil himself at plannin' out, an' bringin' a thing to a conclusion—eh, you deludher?"

"The sarra doubt of it; but takin' the other farm was the brightest thought I seen wid you yit. Will you do it, a villish?"

"To be sure. Didn't I say it? An' it'll be up wid the lark wid me. Hut, woman, you didn't see the half o' what's in me, yit."

"I'll buy you a hat and a pair o' stockins at Christmas."

"Will you, Ellish? Then, by the book, I'll work like a horse."

"I didn't intind to tell you, but I had it laid out for you."

"Faith, you're a beauty, Ellish. What'll we call this young chap that's comin', acushla?"

"Now, Pether, none o' your capers. It's time enough when the thing happens to be thinkin' o' that, glory be to God!"

"Well, you may talk as you plase, but I'll call him Pether."

"An' how do you know but he'll be a girl, you omadhawn?"

"Murdher alive, ay, sure enough! Faith, I didn't think o' that!"

"Well, go up now an' spake to Misther Eccles about the land; maybe somebody else ud slip in afore us, an' that wouldn't be pleasant. Here's your brave big coat, put it an; faix, it makes a man of you—gives you a *bodagh* look entirely: but that's little to what you'll be yet, wid a blessin'—a half sir, anyway."

In fact, Ellish's industry had already gained a character for both herself and her husband. He got credit for the assiduity and activity to which she trained him; and both were respected for their cleverness in advancing themselves from so poor a beginning to the humble state of independence they had then reached. The farm which Ellish was so anxious to secure was the property of the gentleman from whom they held the other. Being a man of sense and penetration, he fortunately saw—what, indeed, was generally well known—that Peter and Ellish were rising in the world, and that their elevation was the consequence of their own unceasing efforts to become independent, so that industry is in every possible point of view its own reward. So long as the farm was open to competition the offers for it multiplied prodigiously, and rose in equal proportion. Persons not worth twenty shillings in the world offered double the rent which the utmost stretch of ingenuity, even with suitable capital, could pay. Newly-married couples, with nothing but the strong imaginative hopes peculiar to their country, proposed for it in a most liberal spirit. Men who had

been ejected out of their late farms for non-payment of rent were ready to cultivate this at a rent much above that which, on better land, they were unable to pay. Others, who had been ejected from farm after farm—each of which they undertook as a mere speculation, to furnish them with present subsistence, but without any ultimate expectation of being able to meet their engagements—came forward with the most laudable efforts. This gentleman, however, was none of those landlords who are so besotted and ignorant of their own interests as to let their lands simply to the highest bidders, without taking into consideration their capital, moral character, and habits of industry. He resided at home, knew his tenants personally, took an interest in their successes and difficulties, and instructed them in the best modes of improving their farms.

Peter's first interview with him was not quite satisfactory on either side. The honest man was like a ship without her rudder when transacting business in the absence of his wife. The fact was that, on seeing the high proposals which were sent in, he became alarmed lest, as he flattered himself that the credit of the transaction should be all his own, the farm might go into the hands of another, and his character for cleverness suffer with Ellish. The landlord was somewhat astounded at the rent which a man who bore so high a name for prudence offered him. He knew it was considerably beyond what the land was worth, and he did not wish that any tenant coming upon his estate should have no other prospect than that of gradually receding into insolvency.

"I cannot give you any answer now," said he to Peter; "but if you will call in a day or two I shall let you know my final determination."

Peter, on coming home, rendered an account of his interview with the landlord to his wife, who no sooner heard of the extravagant proposal he made than she raised her hands and eyes, exclaiming:

"Why thin, Pether, alanna, was it beside yourself you wor to go for to offer a rint that no one could honestly pay! Why, man alive, it ud lave us widout house or home in no time, all out! Sure, Pether, acushla, where ud be the use of us or anyone takin' land, barrin' they could make somethin' by it? Faix, if the gintleman had sinse, he wouldn't give the same farm to anybody at sich a rint; an' for good rasons too—bekase they could never pay it, an himself ud be the sufferer in the long run."

"Dang me, but you're the long-headedest woman alive this day, Ellish. Why, I never wanst wint into the rason o' the thing at all. But you don't know the offers he got."

"Don't I? Why, do you think he'd let the Mullins, or the Conlans, or the O'Donoghoes, or the Duffys upon his land, widout a shillin' in one o' their pockets to stock it, or to begin workin' it properly wid. Hand me my cloak from the pin there, an' get your hat. Katty, avourneen, have an eye to the house till we come back; an' if Dick Murphy comes here to get tobaccy on score, tell him I can't afford it, till he pays up what he got. Come, Pether, in the name o' goodness—come, abouchal."

Ellish, during their short journey to the landlord's, commenced, in her own way, a lecture upon agricultural economy, which, though plain and unvarnished, contained excellent and practical sense. She also pointed out to him when to speak and when to be silent; told him what rent to offer, and in what manner he should offer it; but she did all this so dexterously and sweetly that honest Peter thought the new and corrected views which she furnished him with were altogether the result of his own penetration.

The landlord was at home when they arrived, and ordered them into the parlour, where he soon made his appearance.

"Well, Connell," said he, smiling, "are you come to make me a *higher* offer?"

"Why thin, no, plase your honour," replied Peter, looking for confidence to Ellish: "instead o' that, sir, Ellish here ——"

"Never heed me, alanna; tell his honour what you've to say, out o' the face. Go an, acushla."

"Why, your honour, to tell the blessed thruth, the dickens a bit o' myself but had a sup in my head when I was wid your honour to-day before."

Ellish was thunderstruck at this most unexpected apology from Peter; but the fact was that the instructions which she had given him on their way had completely evaporated from his brain, and he felt himself thrown altogether upon his own powers of invention. Here, however, he was at home; for it was well known among all his acquaintances that, however he might be deficient in the management of a family when compared to his wife, he was capable, notwithstanding, of exerting a certain imaginative faculty in a very high degree. Ellish felt that to contradict him on the spot must lessen both him and herself in the opinion of the landlord, a circumstance that would have given her much pain.

"I'm sorry to hear that, Connell," said Mr. Eccles; "you bear the character of being strictly sober in your habits. You must have been early at the bottle, too, which makes your apology rather unhappy. Of all tipplers, he who drinks early is the worst and most incurable."

"Thrue for you, sir, but this only happens me wanst a year, your honour."

"Once a year! But, by-the-by, you had no appearance of being tipsy, Peter."

"Tipsy! Bud-an'-age, your honour, I was never seen tipsy in all my life," said Peter. "That's a horse of another colour, sir, plase your honour."

The reader must at once perceive that Peter here was only recovering himself from the effects of the injurious impression which his first admission was calculated to produce against him in the mind of his landlord.

"Tipsy! No, no, sir; but the rason of it, sir, was this: it bein my birthday, sir, I merely tuck a sup in the mornin', in honour o' the day. It's altogether a lucky day to me, sir!"

"Why, to be sure, every man's birthday may, probably, be called such—the gift of existence being, I fear, too much undervalued."

"Bedad, your honour, I don't mane that at all."

"Then what *do* you mean, Peter?"

"Why, sir, you see, it's not that I was *entirely* born on this day, but *partly*, sir; I was marrid to Ellish here into the bargain—one o' the best wives, sir—however, I'll say no more, as she's to the fore herself. But, death alive, sir, sure when we put both conclusions together—myself bein' sich a worthy man, and Ellish such a tiptop wife, who could blame me for smellin' the bottle?—for divil a much more I did—about two glasses, sir—an' so it got up into my head a little when I was wid your honour to-day before."

"But what is the amount of all this, Peter?"

"Why, sir, you see only I was as I said, sir—not tipsy, your honour, anyway, but seein' things double or so; an' that was, I suppose, what made me offer for the farm double what I intinded. Everybody knows, sir, that the 'crathur' gives the big heart to us, anyhow, your honour."

"But you know, Peter, we entered into no terms about it. I, therefore, have neither power nor inclination to hold you to the offer you made."

"Faith, sir, you're not the gintleman to do a shabby turn, nor never was, nor one o' your family. There's not in all Europe——"

Ellish, who was a point-blank dealer, could endure Peter's mode of transacting business no longer. She knew that if he once got into the true spirit of applying the oil of flattery to the landlord, he would have rubbed him into a perfect froth ere he quitted him. She, therefore, took up the thread of the discourse, and finished the compliment with much more delicacy than honest Peter could have displayed.

"Thrue for you, Pether," she added; "there is not a kinder family to the poor, nor betther landlords, in the country they live in. Pether an' myself, your honour, on layin' both our heads together, found that he offered more rint for the land nor any tenant could honestly pay. So, sir, where's the use of keepin' back God's thruth—Pether, sir ——"

Peter here trembled from an apprehension that the wife, in accomplishing some object of her own in reference to the land, was about to undeceive the landlord touching the lie which he had so barefacedly palmed upon that worthy gentleman for truth. In fact, his anxiety overcame his prudence, and he resolved to anticipate her.

"I'd advise you, sir," said he, with a smile of significant good-humour, "to be a little suspicious of her, for, to tell the truth, she draws the"—here he illustrated the simile with his staff—"the long bow of an odd time; faith, she does. I'd kiss the book on the head of what I tould you, sir, plase your honour. For the sacret of it is that I tuck the moisture afore she left her bed."

"Why, Pether, alanna," said Ellish, soothingly, "what's comin' over you, at all, an' me goin' to explain to his honour the outs and ins of our opinion about the land? Faix, man, we're not thinkin' about you, good or bad."

"I believe the drop has scarcely left your head yet, Peter," said the landlord.

"Bud-an'-age, your honour, sure we must have our joke, anyhow—doesn't she desarve it, for takin' the words out o' my mouth?"

"Whisht, a villish; you're too cute for us all, Pether. There's no use, sir, as I was sayin', for anyone to deny that when they take a farm they do it to make by it, or at the laste to live comfortably an it. That's the thruth, your honour, an' it's no use to keep it back from you, sir."

"I perfectly agree with you," said the landlord. "It is with these motives that a tenant should wish to occupy land; and it is the duty of every landlord who has his own interest truly at heart to see that his land be not let at such a rent as will preclude the possibility of comfort or independence on the part of his tenantry. He who lets his land *above* its value, merely because people are foolish enough to offer more than it is worth, is as great an enemy to himself as he is to the tenant."

"It's God's thruth, sir, an' it's nothin' else but a comfort to hear sich words comin' from the lips of a gintleman that's a landlord himself."

"Ay, an' a good one, too," said Peter; "an' kind father for his honour to be what he is. Divil resave the family in all Europe ——"

"Thrue for you, avourneen, an' everyone knows that. We wor talkin' it over, sir, betuxt ourselves, Pether an' me, an' he says, very cutely, that, upon second thoughts, he offered more nor we could honestly pay out o' the land; so ——"

"Faith, it's as thrue as Gospel, your honour. Says I, 'Ellish, you beauty'——"

"I thought," observed Mr. Eccles, "that she sometimes drew the long bow, Peter."

"Oh, murdher alive, sir, it was only in regard of her crassin' in an' whippin' the word out o' my mouth that I wanted to take a rise out of her. Oh, bedad, sir, no; the crathur's thruth to the backbone, an' farther if I'd say it."

"So, your honour, considherin' everything, we're willin' to offer thirty shillins an acre for the farm. That rint, sir, we'll be able to pay, wid the help o' God, for sure we can do nothin' widout his assistance, glory be to his name! You'll get many that'll offer you more, your honour; but if it ud be plasin' to you to considher what manes they have to pay it, I think, sir, you'd see out o' your own sinse that it's not likely people who is gone to the bad, an' has nothin', could stand it out long."

"I wish to heaven," replied Mr. Eccles, "that every tenant in Ireland possessed your prudence and good sense. Will you permit me to ask, Mrs. Connell, what capital you and your husband can command, provided I should let you have it?"

"Wid every pleasure in life, sir, for it's but a fair question to put. An' sure, it is to God we owe it, whatever it is, plase your honour. But, sir, if we get the land, we're able to stock it, an' to crop it well an' dacently; an' if your honour would allow us for certain improvements, sir, we'd run it into snug fields, by plantin' good hedges, an' gettin' up shelther for the outlyin' cattle in the hard seasons, plase

your honour, and you know the farm is very naked and bare of shelter at present."

"Sowl, will we, sir, an' far more nor that, if we get it. I'll undertake sir, to level ——"

"No, Pether, we'll promise no more nor we'll do; but anything that his honour will be plased to point out to us, if we get fair support, an' that it remains on the farm afther us, we'll be willin' to do it."

"Willin'!" exclaimed Peter—"faith, whether we're willin' or not, if his honour but says the word ——"

"Mrs. Connell," said their landlord, "say no more. The farm is yours, and you may consider yourselves as my tenants."

"Many thanks to you, sir, for the priference. I hope, sir, you'll not rue what you did in givin' it to us before them that offered a higher rint. You'll find, sir, wid the help o' the Almighty, that we'll pay you your rint regular an' punctual."

"Why, thin, long life, an' glory, an' benediction to your honour! Faith, it's only kind father for you, sir, to be what you are. The divil resave the family in all Europe.——"

"Peter, that will do," replied the landlord; "it would be rather hazardous for our family to compete with all Europe. Go home, Peter, and be guided by your wife, who has more sense in her little finger than ever your family had either in Europe or out of it, although I mean you no offence by going *beyond* Europe."

"By all the books that never wor opened an' shut," replied Peter, with the intuitive quickness of perception peculiar to Irishmen, "an innocenter boy than Andy Connell never was sent acrass the wather. I proved as clear an *alibi* for him as the sun in the firmament; an' yit, bad luck to the big-wig O'Grady, he should be puttin' in his leek an me afore the jury, jist whin I had the poor boy cleared out dacently, an' wid all honour. An' bedad, now that we're spakin' about it, I'll tell your honour the whole conclusions of it. You see, sir, the agint was shot one night; an' above all nights in the year, your honour, a thief of a toothache that I had kep me ——"

"Pether, come away, a bouchal: his honour knows as much about it as you do. Come, aroon; you know we must help to scald an' scrape the pig afore night, an' it's late now."

"Bedad. sir, she's a sweet one, this."

"Be guided by her, Peter, if you're wise: she's a wife you ought to be proud of."

"Thrue for you, sir; divil resave the word o' lie in that, anyhow. Come, Ellish; come, you deludher, I'm wid you."

"God bless your honour sir, an' we're oblaged to you for your kindness an' patience wid the likes of us."

"I say ditto, your honour. Long life an' glory to you every day your honour rises!"

Peter, on his way home, entered into a defence of his apology for offering so high a rent to the landlord; but although it possessed both ingenuity and originality, it was, we must confess, grossly defective in those principles usually inculcated by our best ethic writers.

"Couldn't you have tould him what we agreed upon goin' up?" observed Ellish; "but instead o' that, to begin an' tell the gintleman so many lies about your bein' dhrunk, an' this bein' your birthday, an' the day we wor marrid, an',——Musha, sich quare stories to come into your head!"

"Why," said Peter, "what harm's in all that, whin he didn't *find me out?*"

"But why the sarra did you go to say that *I* was in the custom o' tellin' lies?"

"Faix, bekase I thought you wor goin' to let out all, an' I thought it best to have the first word o' you. What else?—but sure I brought myself off bravely."

"Well, well, a hudh: don't be invintin' sich things another time, or you'll bring yourself into a scrape some way or other."

"Faix, an' *you* needn't spake, Ellish; you can let out a nate bounce yourself, whin it's to sarve you. Come now, don't run away wid the story."

"Well, if I do, it's in the way o' my business; whin I'm batin' them down in the price o' what I'm buyin', or gettin' thim to bid up for anything I'm sellin': besides, it's to advance ourselves in the world that do it, a bouchal."

"Go an, go an; faix, you're like the new moon, sharp at both corners: but what matther, you beauty, we've secured the farm, at any rate, an', by this an' by that, I'll show you tiptop farmin' an it."

A struggle now commenced between the husband and wife as to which of them should, in their respective departments, advance themselves with greater rapidity in life. This friendly contest was kept up principally by the address of Ellish, who, as she knew those points in her husband's character most easily wrought upon, felt little difficulty in shaping him to her own purposes. Her great object was to acquire wealth; and it mostly happens that when this is the ruling principle in life, there is usually to be found in association with it all those qualities which are best adapted to secure it. Peter, on finding that every succeeding day brought something to their gains, began to imbibe a portion of that spirit which wholly absorbed Ellish. He became worldly; but it was rather the worldliness of habit than of principle. In the case of Ellish it proceeded from both: her mind was apt, vigorous, and conceptive; her body active, her manners bland and insinuating, and her penetration almost intuitive. About the time of their entering upon the second farm, four children had been the fruit of their marriage—two sons and two daughters. These were now new sources of anxiety to their mother, and fresh impulses to her industry. Her ignorance, and that of her husband, of any kind of education, she had often, in the course of their business, bitter cause to regret. She now resolved that their children should be well instructed; and no time was lost in sending them to school, the moment she thought them capable of imbibing the simplest elements of instruction.

"It's hard to say," she observed to her husband, "how soon they may be useful to us. Who knows, Pether, but we may have a full shop

yit, an' they may be able to make up bits ot accounts for us, poor things? Throth, I'd be happy if I wanst seen it."

"Faix, Ellish," replied Peter, "if we get an as we're doin', it *is* hard to say. For my own part, if I had got the larnin' in time, I might be a bright boy to-day, no doubt of it—could spake up to the best o' thim. I never wint to school but wanst, an' I remimber I threwn the masther into a kiln-pot, an' broke the poor crathur's arm; an' from that day to this I never could be brought a single day to school."

Peter and Ellish now began to be pointed out as a couple worthy of imitation by those who knew that perseverance and industry never fail of securing their own reward. Others, however,—that is to say, the lazy, the profligate, and the ignorant—had a ready solution for the secret of their success.

"Oh, my dear, she's a *lucky* woman, an' anything she puts her hand to prospers. Sure she was born wid *a lucky caul* an her head; an' be sure, a hagur, the world will flow in upon thim. There's many a neighbour about thim works their fingers to the stumps, an' yit you see they can't get an: for Ellish, if she'd throw the sweepins of her hearth to the wind, it ud come back to her in money. *She was born to it, an' nothin' can keep her from her luck*"

Such are many of the senseless theories that militate against exertion and industry in Ireland, and occasion many to shrink back, from the laudable race of honest enterprise, into filth, penury, and crime. It is this idle and envious crew who, with a natural aversion to domestic industry, become adepts in politics, and active in those illegal combinations and outrages which place the country below the poorest and most barbarous upon the earth.

In the meantime Ellish was rapidly advancing in life, while such persons were absurdly speculating upon the cause of her success. Her business was not only increased, but extended. From crockery, herrings, and salt, she advanced gradually to deal in other branches adapted to her station and the wants of the people. She bought stockings, and retailed them every market day. By-and-by a few pieces of soap might be seen in her windows: starch, blue, potash, and candles were equally profitable. Pipes were seen stuck across each other, flanked by tape, cakes, children's books, thimbles, and bread. In fact, she was equally clever and expert in whatever she undertook. The consciousness of this, and her reputation as being "a hard honest woman," encouraged her to get a cask or two of beer and a few rolls of tobacco. Peter, when she proposed the last two, consented only to sell them still as smuggled goods—*sub silentio*. With her usual prudence, however, she declined this.

"We have gone on that way purty far," she replied, "an' never *got a touch*,[2] thanks to the kindness of our neighbours that never informed an us; but now, Pether, that we're *able*, we had betther do everything above boord. You know the ould say, 'Long runs the fox, but

[1] The doctrine of fatalism is very prevalent among the lower orders 'n Ireland.
[2] Never suffered by the excisemen.

he's catched at last;' so let us give up in time, an' get out a little bit o licence."

"I don't like that at all," replied Peter; "I can't warm my heart to the licence. I'll back you in anything but that. The gauger wor. t come next or near us, he has thried it often, an' never made anything of it. Dang me, but I'd like to have a bit o' fun wid the gauger, to see if my hand's still ready for practice."

"Oh, thin, Pether, how can you talk that way, asthore? Now, if what I'm sayin' was left to yourself wouldn't you be apt to plan it as I'm doin'?—wouldn't you, acushla? Throth, I know you're too cute an' sinsible not to do it."

"Why, thin, do you know what, Ellish—although I didn't spake out, upon my faix I was thinking of it. Divil a word o' lie in it."

"Oh, you thief o' the world, an' never to tell it to me. Faix, Pether, you're a cunnin' shaver, an' as deep as a draw well."

"Let me alone. Why, I tell you, if I study an' lay myself down to it, I can conthrive anything. Whin I was young, many a time my poor father, God be good to him! said that if there was any possibility of gettin' me to take to larnin', I'd be risin' out o' the ashes every mornin' like a phanix."

"But won't you hould to your plan about the licence?"

"Hould? To be sure I will. What was I but takin' a rise out o' you. I intinded it this good while, you phanix—faix, I did."

In this manner did Ellish dupe her own husband into increasing wealth. Their business soon became so extensive that a larger house was absolutely necessary. To leave that, beneath whose roof she succeeded so well in all her speculations, was a point—be it of prudence or of prejudice—which Ellish could not overcome. Her maxim was, wherever you find yourself doing well, stay there. She contrived, however, to remedy this. To the old house additional apartments were, from time to time, added, into which their business soon extended. When these again became too small, others were also built; so that, in the course of about twenty years, their premises were so extensive that the original shebeen-house constituted a very small portion of Peter's residence. Peter, during Ellish's progress within doors, had not been idle without. For every new room added to the house, he was able to hook in a fresh farm, in addition to those he had already occupied. Unexpected success had fixed his heart as strongly upon the accumulation of money, and the pride of rising in the world, as it was possible for a man, to whom they were only adventitious feelings, to experience. The points of view in which he and his wife were contemplated by the little public about them were peculiar, but clearly distinct. The wife was generally esteemed for her talents and incessant application to business; but she was not so cordially liked as Peter. He, on the other hand, though less esteemed, was more beloved by all their acquaintances than Ellish. This might probably originate from the more obvious congeniality which existed between Peter's natural disposition and the national character; for with the latter, Ellish, except good-humour, had little in common. The usual

remarks upon both were—"She would buy an' sell him"—"'Twas she that made a man of him; but for all that, Pether's worth a shipload of her, if she'd give him his own way." That is, if she would permit him to drink with the neighbours, to be idle and extravagant.

Every year, now that their capital was extending, added more perceptibly to their independence. Ellish's experience in the humbler kinds of business trained her for a higher line; just as boys at school rise from one form to another. She made no plunges, nor permitted Peter, who was often inclined to jump at conclusions, to make any. Her elevation was gradual and cautious; for her plans were always so seasonable and simple that every new description of business, and every new success, seemed to arise naturally from that which went before it.

Having once taken out a licence, their house soon became a decent country spirit establishment; from soap, and candles, and tobacco, she rose into the full sweep of groceries; and from dealing in Connemara stockings and tape, she proceeded in due time to sell woollen and linen drapery. Her crockery was now metamorphosed into delf, pottery, and hardware; her gingerbread into stout loaves, for as Peter himself grew wheat largely, she seized the opportunity, presented by the death of the only good baker in the neighbourhood, of opening an extensive bakery.

It may be asked how two illiterate persons, like Peter and Ellish, could conduct business, in which so much calculation was necessary, without suffering severely by their liability to make mistakes. To this we reply—first, that we should have liked to see any person attempting to pass a bad note or a light guinea upon Ellish after nine or ten years' experience; we should like to have seen a smug clerk taking his pen from behind his ear, and after making his calculation, on inquiring from Ellish if she had reckoned up the amount, compelled to ascertain the error which she pointed out to him. The most remarkable point in her whole character was the rapid accuracy she displayed in mental calculation, and her uncommon sagacity in detecting bad money.

There is, however, a still more satisfactory explanation of this circumstance to be given. She had not neglected the education of her children. The eldest was now an intelligent boy, and a smart accountant, who, thanks to his master, had been taught to keep their books by double entry. The second was little inferior to him as a clerk, though as a general dealer he was far his superior. The eldest had been principally behind the counter; whilst the younger, in accompanying his mother in all her transactions and bargain-making, had in a great measure imbibed her address and tact.

It is certainly a pleasing, and, we think, an interesting thing to contemplate the enterprise of a humble, but active, shrewd woman, enabling her to rise, step by step, from the lowest state of poverty to a small sense of independence; from this, by calling fresh powers into action, taking wider views, and following them up by increased efforts, until her shebeen becomes a small country public-house; until her

roll of tobacco, and her few pounds of soap and starch, are lost in the well-filled drawers of a grocery shop ; and her grey Connemara stockings transformed, by the golden wand of industry, into a country cloth warehouse. To see Peter—from the time he first harrowed part of his farm with a thorn-bush, and ploughed it by joining his horse to that of a neighbour—adding farm to farm, horse to horse, and cart to cart, until we find him a wealthy and extensive agriculturist.

The progress of Peter and Ellish was in another point of view a good study for him who wishes to look into human nature whilst adapting itself to the circumstances through which it passes. When this couple began life, their friends and acquaintances were as poor as themselves ; as they advanced from one gradation to another, and rose up from a lower to a higher state, their former friends, who remained in their original poverty, found themselves left behind in cordiality and intimacy as well as in circumstances, whilst the subjects of our sketch continued to make new friendships of a more respectable stamp, to fill up, as it were, the places held in their good will by their humble, but neglected, intimates. Let not our readers, however, condemn them for this. It was the act of society, and not of Peter and Ellish. On their parts it was involuntary ; their circumstances raised them, and they were compelled, of course, to rise with their circumstances. They were passing through the journey of life, as it were, and those with whom they set out, not having been able to keep up with them, soon lost their companionship, which was given to those with whom they travelled for the time being. Society is always ready to reward the enterprising and industrious by its just honours, whether they are sought or not ; it is so disposed that every man falls or rises into his proper place in it, and that by the wisdom and harmony of its structure. The rake, who dissipates by profligacy and extravagance that which might have secured him an honourable place in life, is eventually brought to the workhouse ; whilst the active citizen, who realises an honest independence, is viewed with honour and esteem.

Peter and Ellish were now people of consequence in the parish : the former had ceased to do anything more than superintend the cultivation of his farms ; the latter still took an active part in her own business, or rather in the various departments of business which she carried on. Peter might be seen the first man abroad in the morning, proceeding to some of his farms mounted upon a good horse, comfortably dressed in top boots, stout corduroy breeches, buff cashmere waistcoat, and blue broadcloth coat, to which in winter were added a strong frieze great-coat, with a drab velvet collar, and a glazed hat. Ellish was also respectably dressed, but still considerably under her circumstances. Her mode of travelling to fairs or markets was either upon a common car, covered with a feather bed and quilt, or behind Peter upon a pillion. This last method flattered Peter's vanity very much ; no man could ride on these occasions with a statelier air. He kept himself as erect and stiff as a poker, and brandished the thong of his loaded whip with the pride of a gentleman farmer.

'Tis true, he did not always hear the sarcastic remarks which were passed upon him by those who witnessed his good-natured vanity :

"There he goes," some labouring man on the wayside would exclaim, "a purse-proud *bodagh* upon our hands. Why, thin, does he forget that we remimber when he kept the shebeen-house, an' sould his smuggled tobaccy in *gits* out of his pocket, for fraid o' the gauger! Sowl, he'd show a blue nose, anyway, only for the wife—'twas she made a man of him."

"Faith, an' I, for one, won't hear Pether Connell run down," his companion would reply; "he's a good-hearted, honest man, an' oblagin' enough ; an' for that matter, so is the wife—a hard, honest woman, that made what they have, an' brought herself and her husband from nothin' to somethin'."

"Thrue for you, Tim ; in throth they *do* desarve credit. Still, you see, here's you an' me, and we've both been slavin' ourselves as much as they were, an' yet you see how we are ! However, *it's their luck*, an' there's no use in begrudgin' it to them."

When their children were full grown, the mother did not, as might have been supposed, prevent them from making a respectable appearance. With excellent judgment, she tempered their dress, circumstances and prospects so well together that the family presented an admirable display of economy and a decent sense of independence. From the moment they were able to furnish solid proofs of their ability to give a comfortable dinner occasionally, the priest of the parish began to notice them ; and this new intimacy, warmed by the honour conferred on one side, and by the good dinners on the other, ripened into a strong friendship. For many a long year, neither Peter nor Ellish, God forgive them, ever troubled themselves about going to their duty. They soon became, however, persons of too much importance to be damned without an effort made for their salvation. The worthy gentleman accordingly addressed them on the subject, and as the matter was one of perfect indifference to both, they had not the slightest hesitation to go to confession—in compliment to the priest. We do not blame the priest for this ; God forbid that we should quarrel with a man for eating a good dinner. If we ourselves were a priest, it is very probable—nay, from the zest with which we approach a good dinner, it is quite certain—that we would have cultivated honest Peter's acquaintance, and drawn him out to the practice of that most social of virtues, hospitality. The salvation of such a man's soul was worth looking after ; and, indeed, we find a much warmer interest felt, in all churches, for those who are able to give good dinners than for those poor miserable sinners who can scarcely get even a bad one.

But, besides this, there was another reason for the Rev. Mr. Mulcahy's anxiety to cultivate a friendship with Peter and his wife ; which reason consisted in a very laudable determination to bring about a match between his own niece, Miss Granua Mulcahy, and Peter's eldest son, Dan. This speculation he had not yet broached to the family, except by broken hints and jocular allusions to the very flattering pro-

posals that had been made by many substantial young men for Miss Granua.

In the meantime the wealth of the Connells had accumulated to thousands; their business in the linen and woollen drapery line was incredible. There was scarcely a gentleman within many miles of them who did not find it his interest to give them his custom. In the hardware, flour, and baking concerns they were equally extensive. The report of their wealth had gone far and near, exaggerated, however, as everything of the kind is certain to be; but stiill there were ample grounds for estimating it at a very high amount.

Their stores were large, and well filled with many a valuable bale; their cel'ars well stocked with every description of spirits; and their shop, though not large in proportion to their transactions, was well filled, neat, and tastefully fitted up. There was no show, however—no empty glare to catch the eye; on the contrary, the whole concern was marked by an air of solid, warm comfort that was much more indicative of wealth and independence than tawdry embellishment would have been.

"Avourneen," said Ellish, "the way to deck out your shop is to keep the best of goods. Wanst the people knows that they'll get betther moneyworth here than they'll get anywhere else, they'll come here, whether the shop looks well or ill. Not sayin' but every shop ought to be clane an' dacent, for there's rason in all things."

This, indeed, was another secret of their success. Every article in their shop was of the best description, having been selected by Ellish's own eye and hand in the metropolis, or imported directly from the place of its manufacture. Her periodical visits to Dublin gave her great satisfaction: for it appears that those with whom she dealt, having had sufficient discrimination to appreciate her talents and integrity, treated her with marked respect.

Peter's farmyard bore much greater evidence of his wealth than did Ellish's shop. It was certainly surprising to reflect that by the capacity of two illiterate persons, who began the world with nothing, all the best and latest improvements in farming were either adopted or anticipated. The farmyard was upon a great scale; for Peter cultivated no less than four hundred acres of land—to such lengths had his enterprise carried him. Threshing-machines, large barns, corn-kilns, large stacks, extensive stables, and immense cow-houses, together with the incessant din of active employment perpetually going on—all gave a very high opinion of their great property, and certainly reflected honour upon those whose exertions had created such a scene about them. One would naturally suppose, when the family of the Connells had arrived to such unexpected riches, and found it necessary to conduct a system whose machinery was so complicated and extensive, that Ellish would have fallen back to the simple details of business, from a deficiency of that comprehensive intelligence which is requisite to conduct the higher order of mercantile transactions; especially as her sons were admirably qualified, by practice, example, and education, to ease her of a task which would

appear one of too much difficulty for an unlettered farmer's wife. Such a supposition would be injurious to this excellent woman. So far from this being the case, she was still the moving spirit, the chief conductor of the establishment. Whenever any difficulty arose that required an effort of ingenuity and sagacity, she was able, in the homeliest words, to disentangle it so happily that those who heard her wondered that it should at all have appeared to them as a difficulty. She was everywhere. In Peter's farmyard her advice was as excellent and as useful as in her own shop. On his farms she was the better agriculturist, and she frequently set him right in his plans and speculations for the ensuing year.

She herself was not ignorant of her skill. Many a time has she surveyed the scene about her with an eye in which something like conscious pride might be seen to kindle. On those occasions she usually shook her head, and exclaimed, either in soliloquy, or by way of dialogue, to some person near her :

"Well, avourneen, all's very right, an' goin' an bravely ; but I only hope that when *I'm gone* I won't be missed!"

"Missed," Peter would reply, if he happened to hear her ; "oh, upon my credit"—he was a man of too much consequence to swear "by this an' by that" now—"upon my credit, Ellish, if you die soon, you'll see the ginteel wife I'll have in your place."

"Whisht, avourneen ! Although you're but jokin', I don't like to hear it, a villish ! No, indeed ; we wor too long together, Pether, and lived too happily wid one another, for you to have the heart to think of sich a thing !"

"No, in throth, Ellish, I would be long sarry to do it. It's displasin' to you, achree, an' I won't say it. God spare you to us ! It was you put the bone in us, an' that's what all the country says, big an' little, young an' ould ; an' God he knows it's thruth, and nothin' else."

"Indeed, no, thin, Pether, it's not altogether thruth, you desarve your full share of it. You backed me well, acushla, in everything, an' if you had been a dhrinkin', idle, rollikin' vagabone, what ud signify all that me, or the likes o' me, could do."

"Faith, an' it was you made me what I am, Ellish ; you tuck the soft side o' me, you beauty ; an' it's well you did, for by this—hem, upon my reputation, if you had gone to cross purposes wid me, you'd find yourself in the wrong box. An', you phanix o' beauty, you managed the childhre, the crathurs, the same way—an' a good way it is, in throth."

"Pether, wor you ever thinkin' o' Father Mulcahy's *sweetness* to us of late?"

"No, thin, the sorra one o' me thought of it. Why, Ellish?"

"Didn't you obsarve that for the last three or four months he's full of attintions to us? Every Sunday he brings *you* up, an' *me if I'd go*, to the althar, an' keeps you there by way of showin' you respect. Pether, it's not you, but your money he respects ; an' I think there ought to be no respect o' persons in the chapel, anyhow. You're not a bit nearer God by bein' near the althar ; for how

do we know but the poorest crathur there is nearer to heaven than we are!"

"Faith, sure enough, Ellish; but what deep skame are you penethratin' now, you desaver?"

"I'd lay my life, you'll have a proposial o' marriage from Father Mulcahy, atween our Dan an' Miss Granua. For many a day he's hintin' to us, from time to time, about the great offers she had; now what's the rason, if *she* had these great offers, that *he* didn't take them?"

"Bedad, Ellish, you're the greatest headpiece in all Europe. Murdher alive, woman, what a fine counsellor you'd make. An suppose he did offer, Ellish, what ud you be sayin' to him?"

"Why that ud depind entirely upon what he's able to give her—they say he has money. It ud depind, too, upon whether Dan has any likin' for her or not."

"He's often wid her, I know; an' I needn't tell you, Ellish, that afore we wor spliced together I was often wid somebody that I won't mintion. At all evints, he has made Dan put the big O afore the Connell, so that he has him now full namesake to the counsellor; an', faith, *that itself ud get him a wife.*"

"Well, the best way is to say nothin', an' to hear nothin', till his reverence spakes out, an' thin we'll see what can be done."

Ellish's sagacity had not misled her. In a few months afterwards Father Mulcahy was asked by young Dan Connell to dine; and as he and honest Ellish were sitting together, in the course of the evening, the priest broached the topic as follows:

"Mrs. Connell, I think this whisky is better than my four year old, that I bought at the Protestant Bishop of ——'s auction, although Dan says mine's better. Between ourselves, that Dan is a clever, talented young fellow; and if he happens upon a steady, sensible wife, there is no doubt but he will die a respectable man. But, by-the-by, Mrs. Connell, you've never tried *my* whisky; and, upon my credit, you must soon, for I know your opinion would decide the question."

"Is it worth while to decide it, your reverence? I suppose the thruth is, sir, that both is good enough for anyone; an' I think that's as much as we want."

Thus far she went, but never alluded to Dan, judiciously throwing the *onus* of introducing *that* subject upon the priest.

"Dan says mine's better," observed Father Mulcahy; "and I would certainly give a great deal for his opinion upon that or any other subject, except theology."

"You ought," replied Ellish, "to be in betther judge of whisky nor either Dan nor me; an' I'll tell you why—you dhrink it in more places, and can make comparishment one wid another; but Dan an' me is confined mostly to our own, an' of that same we take very little, an' the less the betther for people in business, or indeed for anybody."

"Very true, Mrs. Connell! But, for all that, I won't give up Dan's judgment in anything within his own line of business, still excepting theology, for which he hasn't the learning."

"He's a good son, witdout *tay*ology—as good as ever broke the world's bread," said Peter, "glory be to God! Although, for that matther, he ought to be as well acquainted wid *tay*ology as your reverence, in regard that he *sells* more of it nor you do."

"A good son, they say, Mrs. Connell, will make a good husband. I wonder you don't think of settling him in life. It's full time."

"Father, avourneen, we must lave that wid himself. I needn't be tellin' you that it ud be hard to find a girl able to bring what any girl that ud expect Dan *ought* to bring."

This was a staggerer to the priest, who recruited his ingenuity by drinking Peter's health, and Ellish's.

"Have you *nobody* in your eye for him, Mrs. Connell?"

"Faith, I'll engage she has," replied Peter, with a ludicrous grin, "I'll venture for to say she has *that*."

"Very right, Mrs. Connell; it's all fair. Might one ask who she is? for, to tell you the truth, Dan is a favourite of mine, and I must make it a point to see him well settled."

"Why, your reverence," replied Peter again, "jist the one you mintioned."

"Who? I? Why I mentioned *nobody*."

"An' *that's* the very one she has in her eye for him, plase your reverence—ha, ha, ha! What's the world widout a joke, docthor, beggin' your pardon for makin so free wid you?"

"Peter, you're still a wag," replied the priest; "but, seriously, Mrs. Connell, have you selected any female of *respectable connections*, as a likely person to be a wife for Dan?"

"Indeed no, your reverence; I have not. Where could I pitch upon a girl—barrin' a Protestant, an' that ud never do—who has a fortune to meet what Dan's to get?"

The priest moved his chair a little, and drank their healths a second time.

"But you know, Mrs. Connell, that Dan needn't care so much about fortune, if he got a girl of *respectable connections*. He has an independence himself."

"Thrue for you, father; but what right would any girl have to expect to be supported by the hard arnin' of me an' my husband, widout bringin' somethin' forrid herself? You know, sir, that the fortune always goes wid the wife; but am I to fortune off my son to a girl that has nothin'? If my son, plase your reverence, hadn't a coat to his back, or a guinea in his pocket—as, God be praised, he has both—but, supposin' he hadn't, what right would he have to expect a girl wid a handsome fortune to marry him? There's Paddy Neil, your sarvant-boy; now, if Paddy, who's an honest man's son, axed your niece, wouldn't you be apt to lose your timper?"

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Connell, I think your fire's rather hot—allow me to draw back a little. Mrs. Connell, your health again!—Mr. C., your fireside!"

"Thank you, docthor; but faith I think you ough hardly to dhrink the same fireside, bekase it appears to be rather *hot* for your reverence

at the present time—ha, ha, ha! Jokin' still, docthor, we must be. Well, what harm! I wish we may never do worse!"

"And what fortune would you expect with a girl of *genteel connections*—a girl that's accomplished, we'll say in music, plain work, and Irish, vernacularly?—hem! What fortune would you be expecting with such a girl?"

"Why, docthor, a hagur, the only music I'd wish for my son's wife is a good timper; an' that's what their music-masthers can't taiche thim. The plain work, although I don't know what you mane by it, sounds well enough; an' as to *Idish, whick-whackularly*, if you mane our own ould tongue, he may get thousands that can spake it *whack-ingly*, an' nothin' else."

"You're a wealthy woman, certainly, Mrs. Connell, and what's more, I'm not surprised at it. Your health, once more, and long life to you! Suppose, however, that Dan got a fitting wife, what would you expect for a proper portion? I have a reason for asking."

"Dan, plase your reverence, will get four thousand to begin the world wid; an', as he's to expect none but a Catholic, I suppose if he gets the fourth part of that, it's as much as he ought to look for."

"A thousand pounds!—hut tut! The woman's beside herself. Why, look about you, and try where you can find a Catholic girl with a thousand pounds fortune, except in a gentleman's family, where Dan could never think of going."

"That's thrue, anyhow, your reverence," observed Peter. "A thousand pounds! Ellish, you needn't look for it. Where is it to be had out of a gentleman's family, as his reverence says, thrue enough."

"An' now, docthor," said Ellish, "what ud *you* think a girl ought to bring a young man like Dan, that's to have four thousand pounds?"

"I don't think any Catholic girl of his own rank in the county could get more than a couple of hundred."

"That's one shillin' to every pound he has," replied Ellish, almost instantaneously. "But, father, you may as well spake out at wanst," she continued, for she was too quick and direct in all her dealings to be annoyed by circumlocution; "you're desairous of a match between Dan an' Miss Granua?"

"Exactly," said the priest; "and what is more, I believe they are fond of each other. I know Dan is attached to her, for he told me so. But, now that we have mentioned her, I say there is not a more accomplished girl of her persuasion in the parish we sit in. She can play on the bag-pipes better than any other piper in the province, for I taught her myself; and I tell you that in a respectable man's wife a knowledge of music is a desirable thing. It's hard to tell, Mrs. Connell, how they may rise in the world, and get into fashionable company, so that accomplishments, you persave, are good. She can make a shirt and wash it, and she can write Irish. As for dancing, I only wish you'd see her at a hornpipe. All these things put together, along with her genteel connections, and the prospect of what I may be able to lave her—I say your son may do worse."

"It's not what you'd lave her, sir, but what you'd give her in the first place, that I'd like to hear. Spake up, your reverence, an' let us know how far you *will* go."

"I'm afeard, sir," said Peter, "if it goes to a clane bargain atween yees, that Ellish will make you bid up for Dan. Be sharp, sir, or you'll have no chance; faix, you won't."

"But, Mrs. Connell," replied the priest, "before I spake up, consider her accomplishments. I'll undertake to say that the best bred girl in Dublin cannot perform music in such a style, or on such an instrument as the one she uses. Let us contemplate Dan and her after marriage, in an elegant house, and full business, the dinner, and they gone up to the drawing-room. Think how agreeable and graceful it would be for Mrs. Daniel O'Connell to repair to the sofa, among a few respectable friends, and, taking up her bag-pipes, set her elbow a-going, until the drone gives two or three broken groans, and the chanter a squeak or two, like a child in the cholic, or a cat that you had trampled on by accident. Then comes the real old Irish music, that warms the heart. Dan looks upon her graceful position, until the tears of love, taste and admiration are coming down his cheeks. By-and-by, the toe of him moves; here another foot is going! and, in no time there is a hearty dance, with a light heart and a good conscience. You or I, perhaps, drop in to see them, and, of course, we partake of the enjoyment."

"Divil a pleasanter," said Peter: "I tell you, I'd like it well; an', for my own part, if the deludher here has no objection, *I'm* not goin' to spoil sport."

Ellish looked hard at the priest; her keen blue eye glittered with a sparkling light, that gave decided proofs of her sagacity being intensely excited.

"All that you've said," she replied, "is very fine; but in regard o' the bag-pipes, an' Miss Granua Mulcahy's squeezin' the music out o' thim—why, if it plased God to bring my son to the staff an' bag—a common beggar—indeed, in that case, Miss Granua's bag-pipes might sarve both o' thim, an' help, maybe, to get them a night's lodgin' or so; but until that time comes, if you respect your niece, you'll burn her bag-pipes, dhrone, chanther, an' all. If you *are* for a match, which I doubt, spake out, as I said, and say what fortune you'll pay down on the nail wid her, otherwise we're losin' our time, an' that's a loss one can't make up."

The priest, who thought he could have bantered Ellish into an alliance, without pledging himself to pay any specific fortune, found that it was necessary for him to treat the matter seriously, if he expected to succeed. He was certainly anxious for the match; and as he really wished to see his niece—who, in truth, was an excellent girl, and handsome—well settled, he resolved to make a stretch and secure Dan if possible.

"Mrs. Connell," said he, "I will be brief with you. The most I can give her is three hundred pounds, and even that by struggling and borrowing. I will undertake to pay it as you say—on the nail!

for I am really anxious that my niece should be connected with so worthy and industrious a family. What do you say?"

"*I'm* willin' enough," replied Peter. "It's not asy to get that wid a Catholic girl."

"There's some thruth in what you say, aroon, sure enough,' observed Ellish; "an' if his reverence puts another hundhre to it, why, in the name of goodness, let them go together. If you don't choose that, docthor, never breathe the subject to me agin. Dan's not an ould man yit, an' has time enough to get wives *galore*."

"Come," replied the priest, "there's my hand, it's a bargain; although I must say there's no removing you from your point. I *will* give four hundred, hook or crook; but I'll have sad scrambling to get it together. Still I'll make it good."

"Down on the nail?" inquired Ellish.

"Ay! ay! Down on the nail," replied the priest.

"Well, in the name o' goodness, a bargain be it," said Peter; "but, upon my credit, Ellish, I won't have the bag-pipes burnt, anyhow. Faith, I must hear an odd tune, now an' thin, when I call to see the childhre."

"Pether, acushla, have sinse. Would you wish to see your daughter-in-law playin' upon the bag-pipes when she ought to be mindin' her business, or attendin' her childhre? No, your reverence, the pipes must be laid aside. I'll have no piperly connection for a son of mine."

The priest consented to this, although Peter conceded it with great reluctance. Further preliminaries were agreed upon, and the evening passed pleasantly, until it became necessary for Mr. Mulcahy to bid them good night.

When he was gone, Peter and Ellish talked over the matter between themselves in the following dialogue:

"The fortune's a small one," said Ellish to her husband; "an' I suppose you wondher that I consinted to take so little."

"Sure enough, I wondhered at it," replied Peter: "but, for my own part, I'd give my son to her widout a penny o' fortune, in ordher to be connected wid the priest; an' besides, she's a fine, handsome, good girl—ay, an' his fill of a wife, if she had but the shift to her back."

"Four hundhre wid a priest's niece, Pether, is before double the money wid any other. Don't you know, that when they set up for themselves, he can bring the custom of the whole parish to them? It's unknown the number o' ways he can sarve them in. Sure, at stations an' weddins, wakes, marriages, and funerals, they'll all be proud to let the priest know that they purchased whatever they wanted from his niece an' her husband. Betther!—faix, four hundhre from *him* is worth three times as much from another."

"Glory to you, Ellish!—bright an' cute for ever! Why, I'd back you for a woman that could buy an' sell Europe, aginst the world. Now, isn't it odd that I never think of these long-headed skames?"

"Ay do you, often enough, Pether; but you keep them to yourself, abouchal."

"Faith, I'm close, no doubt of it; an'—but there's no use in sayin' any more about it—you said whatsomever came into my own head consarnin' it. Faith, you did, you phanix."

In a short time the marriage took place. Dan, under the advice of his mother, purchased a piece of ground, most advantageously located, as the site of a mill, whereon an excellent one was built; and as a good mill had been long a desideratum in the country, his success was far beyond his expectations. Every speculation, in fact, which Ellish touched, prospered. Fortune seemed to take delight either in accomplishing or anticipating her wishes. At least, such was the general opinion, although nothing could possibly be more erroneous than to attribute her success to mere chance. The secret of all might be ascribed to her good sense and her exact knowledge of the precise moment when to take the tide of fortune at its flow. Her son, in addition to the mill, opened an extensive mercantile establishment in the next town, where he had ample cause to bless the instructions of his mother, and her foresight in calculating upon the advantage of being married to the priest's niece.

Soon after his marriage the person who had for many years kept the head inn of the next town died, and the establishment was advertised for sale. Ellish was immediately in action. Here was an opportunity of establishing the second son in a situation which had enabled the late proprietor of it to die nearly the richest man in the parish. A few days, therefore, before that specified for the sale, she took her feather-bed car, and had an interview with the executors of the late proprietor. Her character was known, her judgment and integrity duly estimated, and, perhaps, what was the weightiest argument in her favour, her purse was forthcoming to complete the offer she had made. After some private conversation between the executors her proposal was accepted, and before she returned home the head inn, together with all its fixtures and furniture, was her property.

The second son, who was called after his father, received the intelligence with delight. One of his sisters was, at his mother's suggestion, appointed to conduct the housekeeping department and keep the bar, a duty for which she was pretty well qualified by her experience at home.

"I will paint it in great style," said Peter the younger. "It must be a head inn no longer: I'll call it a hotel, for that's the whole fashion."

"It wants little, avourneen," said his mother; "it was well kep': some paintin' an' other improvements it does want, but don't be extravagant. Have it clane an' dacent, but, above all things, comfortable, an' the attindance good. That's what'll carry you an—not a flourish o' paintin' outside, an' dirt, an' confusion, an' bad attindance widin. Considher, Pether, darlin', that the man who owned it last feathered his nest well in it, but never called it a hotill. Let it appear on the outside jist as your ould customers used to see it; but improve it widin as much as you can, widout bein' lavish an it, or takin' up the place wid nonsense."

"At all evints, I'll have a picture of the Liberator over the door, an'

'O'Connell' written under it. It's both our names, and, besides, it will be 'killin' two birds with one stone.'"

"No, avourneen. Let me advise you, if you wish to prosper in life, to keep yourself out of party work. It only stands betune you an' your business; an' it's surely wiser for you to mind your own affairs than the affairs of the nation. There's rason in everything. No man in trade has a right, widout committin' a sin, to neglect his family for politics or parties. There's Jack Cummins, that was doin' well in his groceries, till he began to make speeches, an' get up public meetins, an' write petitions; an' now he has nothin' to throuble him *but* politics, for his business is gone. Everyone has liberty to think as they plase. We can't expect Protestants to think as we do, nor Protestants can't suppose that we ought to think as they'd wish; an' for that same rason we should make allowances on both sides, an' not be like many we know, that have their minds up, expectin' they don't know what, instead of workin' for themselves an' their families, as they ought to do. Pether, won't you give that up, a villish?"

"I believe you're right, mother. I didn't see it before in the light you've placed it in."

"Then, Pether, darlin', lose no time in gettin' into your place—you an' Alley; an' faix, if you don't both manage it cleverly, I'll never spake to yees."

Here was a second son settled, and nothing remained but to dispose of their two daughters in marriage to the best and most advantageous offers. This, in consequence of their large fortunes, was not a matter of much difficulty. The eldest, Alley, who assisted her brother to conduct the inn, became the wife of an extensive grazier, who lived in another county. The younger, Mary, was joined to Father Mulcahy's nephew, not altogether to the satisfaction of the mother, who feared that two establishments of the same kind, in the same parish, supported by the same patronage, must thrive at the expense of each other. As it was something of a love-match, however, she ultimately consented.

"Avourneen," said she, "the parish is big enough, an' has customers enough to support them both; an' I'll engage his reverence will do what he can for both o' them."

In the meantime neither she nor her husband was dependent upon their children. Peter still kept the agricultural department in operation; and although the shop and warehouse were transferred to Mr. Mulcahy, in right of his wife, yet it was under the condition of paying a yearly sum to Mrs. Connell and her husband, ostensibly as a provision, but really as a spur to their exertions. A provision they could not want, for their wealth still amounted to thousands, independently of the large annual profits arising out of their farms.

For some time after the marriage of her youngest daughter, Mrs. Connell took a very active part in her son-in-law's affairs. He possessed neither experience nor any knowledge of business whatsoever, though he was not deficient in education, nor in capacity to acquire both. This pleased Mrs. Connell very much, who set herself to the

task of instructing him in the principles of commercial life, and in the best methods of transacting business.

"The first rules," said she to him, "for you to obsarve is these: tell truth; be sober; be punctual; rise early; persavere; avoid extravagance; keep your word; an' watch your health. Next: don't be proud; give no offince: talk sweetly; be ready to oblage, when you can do it widout inconvenience, but don't put yourself or your business out o' your ways to sarve anybody.

"Thirdly: keep an appearance of substance an' comfort about your place, but don't go beyant your manes in doin' it; when you make a bargain, think what correcther them you dale wid bears, an' whether or not you found them honest before, if you ever had business wid them.

"When you buy a thing, appear to know your own mind, an' don't be hummin' an' hawin', an' higglin' an' longin' as if your teeth wor watherin' afther it; but be manly, downright, an' quick; they'll then see that you know your business, an' they won't be keepin' off an' an, but will close wid you at wanst.

"Never drink at bargain making'; an' never pay money in a public-house if you can help it; if you must do it, go into an inn or a house that you know to be dacent.

"Never stay out late in a fair or market: don't make a poor mouth; on the other hand, don't boast of your wealth; keep no low company; don't be rubbin' yourself aginst your betthers, but keep wid your aquils. File your loose papers an' accounts; an' keep your books up to the day. Never put off anything that can be done, when it ought to be done. Go early to bed; but be the last up at night, and the first in the mornin', an' there's no fear o' you."

Having now settled all her children in comfort and independence, with each a prospect of rising still higher in the world, Mrs. Connell felt that the principal duties devolving upon her had been discharged. It was but reasonable, she thought, that, after the toil of a busy life, her husband and herself should relax a little, and enjoy with lighter minds the ease for which they had laboured so long and unremittingly.

"Do you know what I'm thinkin' of, Pether?" said she, one summer evening in their farm-yard.

"Know, is it?" replied Peter—"some long-headed plan that none of us ud ever think of, but that will stare us in the face the moment you mintion it. What is it, you ould sprig o' beauty?"

"Why, to get a snug jauntin'-car for you an' me. I'd like to see you comfortable in your ould days, Pether. You're gettin' stiff, a hagur, an' will be good for nothin', by-an'-by."

"Stiff! Arrah, by this an' by—my reputation, I'm younger nor e'er a one o' my sons yet, you——eh?" said Peter, pausing—"Faith then, I dunna that. Upon my credit, I think, on second thoughts, that a car ud be a mighty comfortable thing for me. Faith I do, an' for you too, Ellish."

"The common car," she continued, "is slow an' throublesome, an' joults the life out o' me."

"By my reputation, you're not the same woman since you began to

use it that you wor before, at all. Why, it'll shorten your life. The pillion's dacent enough ; but the jauntin' car !—faix, it's what ud make a fresh woman o' you—divil a lie in it."

"You're not puttin' in a word for *yourself* now, Pether?"

"To be sure I am, an' for both of us. I'd surely be proud to see yourself an myself sittin' in our glory upon our own jauntin'-car. Sure we can afford it, an' ought to have it too. Bud-an'-ager! what's the rason I didn't think of it long ago?"

"Maybe you did, acushla ; but you forgot it. Wasn't that the way wid you, Pether? Tell the thruth."

"Why, thin, bad luck to the lie in it, since you must know. About this time twelve months—no, faix, I'm wrong, it was afore Dan's marriage—I had thoughts o' spakin' to you about it, but somehow it left my head. Upon my word, I'm in arnest, Ellish."

"Well, avick, make your mind asy ; I'll have one from Dublin in less nor a fortnight. I can thin go about of an odd time, an' see how Dan an' Pether's comin' an. It'll be a pleasure to me to advise an' direct thim, sure, as far an' as well as I can. I only hope God will enable thim to do as much for their childher as he enabled us to do for them, glory be to his name!"

Peter's eye rested upon her as she spoke : a slight shade passed over his face, but it was the symptom of deep feeling and affection, whose current had run smooth and unbroken during the whole life they had spent together.

"Ellish," said he, in a tone of voice that strongly expressed what he felt, "you wor one o' the best wives that ever the Almighty gev to mortual man. You wor, avourneen—you wor, you wor!"

"I intind, too, to begin an' make my sowl a little," she continued ; "we had so much to do, Pether, aroon, that, indeed, we hadn't time to think of it all along ; but now that everything *else* is settled, we ought to think about *that*, an' make the most of our time while we can."

"Upon my conscience, I've strong notions myself o' the same thing" replied Peter. "An I'll back you in that, as well as in everything else. Never fear, if we pull together, but we'll bring up the lost time. Faith, we will! Sowl, if *you* set about it, let me see them that ud prevint your goin' to heaven!"

"Did Paddy Donovan get the bay filly's foot ased, Pether?"

"He's gone down wid her to the forge : the poor crathur was very lame to-day."

"That's right ; an' let Andy Murtagh bring down the sacks from Drumdough early to-morrow. That whate ought to go to the market on Thursday, an' the other stacks ought to be thrashed out off hand."

"Well, well; so it will be all done. Tar alive! if myself knows how you're able to keep an eye on everything. Come in, an' let us have our *tay*."

For a few months after this Ellish was perfectly in her element. The jaunting-car was procured ; and her spirits seemed to be quite elevated. She paid regular visits to both her sons, looked closely into their manner of conducting business, examined their premises, and

subjected every fixture and improvement, made or introduced without her sanction, to the most rigorous scrutiny. In fact, what between Peter's farm, her daughter's shop, and the establishments of her sons, she never found herself more completely encumbered with business. She had intended "to make her soul," but her time was so fully absorbed by the affairs of those in whom she felt so strong an interest that she really forgot the spiritual resolution in the warmth of her secular pursuits.

One evening, about this time, a horse belonging to Peter happened to fall into a ditch, from which he was extricated with much difficulty by the labourers. Ellish, who thought it necessary to attend, had been standing for some time directing them how to proceed ; her dress was rather thin, and the hour, which was about twilight, chilly, for it was the middle of autumn. Upon returning home she found herself cold, and inclined to shiver. At first she thought but little of these symptoms ; for having never had a single day's sickness, she was scarcely competent to know that they were frequently the forerunners of very dangerous and fatal maladies. She complained, however, of slight illness, and went to bed without taking anything calculated to check what she felt. Her sufferings during the night were dreadful: high fever had set in with a fury that threatened to sweep the powers of life like a wreck before it. The next morning the family, on looking into her state more closely, found it necessary to send instantly for a physician.

On arriving, he pronounced her to be in a dangerous pleurisy, from which, in consequence of her plethoric habit, he expressed but faint hopes of her recovery. This was melancholy intelligence to her sons and daughters ; but to Peter, whose faithful wife she had been for thirty years, it was a dreadful communication indeed.

"No hopes, docthor!" he exclaimed, with a bewildered air : "did you say no hopes, sir?—Oh! no, you didn't—you couldn't say that there's no hopes!"

"The hopes of her recovery, Mr. Connell, are but slender."

"Docthor, I'm a rich man, thanks be to God an' to ——" he hesitated, cast back a rapid and troubled look towards the bed whereon she lay, then proceeded—"No matther, I'm a rich man : but if you can spare her to me, I'll divide what I'm worth in this world wid you : I will, sir ; an' if that won't do, I'll give up my last shillin' to save her, an' thin I'll beg my bit an' sup through the counthry, only let me have *her* wid me."

"As far as my skill goes," said the doctor, "I shall, of course, exert it to save her ; but there are some diseases which we are almost always able to pronounce fatal at first sight. This, I fear, is one of them. Still I do not bid you despair, there is, I trust, a shadow of hope."

"The blessin' o' the Almighty be upon you, sir, for that word! The best blessin' o' the heavenly Father rest upon you an yours for it!"

"I shall return in the course of the day," continued the physician ; "and as you feel the dread of her loss so powerfully, I will bring two other medical gentlemen of skill with me."

"Heavens reward you for that, sir! The heavens above reward you an' them for it! Payment!—och, that signifies but little: but you an' them 'ill be well paid. Oh, docthor, achora, thry an' save her!—Och, thry an' save her!"

"Keep her easy," replied the doctor, "and let my directions be faithfully followed. In the meantime, Mr. Connell, be a man, and display proper fortitude under a dispensation which is common to all men in your state."

To talk of resignation to Peter was an abuse of words. The poor man had no more perception of the consolations arising from a knowledge of religion than a child. His heart sank within him, for the prop on which his affections had rested was suddenly struck down from under them.

Poor Ellish was in a dreadful state. Her malady seized her in the very midst of her worldly-mindedness; and the current of her usual thoughts, when stopped by the aberrations of intellect peculiar to her illness, bubbled up, during the temporary returns of reason, with a stronger relish of the world. It was utterly impossible for a woman like her, whose habits of thought and the tendency of whose affections had been all directed towards the acquisition of wealth, to wrench them for ever and at once from the objects on which they were fixed. This, at any time, would have been to her a difficult victory to achieve; but now, when stunned by the stroke of disease, and confused by the pangs of severe suffering, tortured by a feverish pulse and a burning brain, to expect that she could experience the calm hopes of religion, or feel the soothing power of Christian sorrow, was utter folly. 'Tis true, her life had been a harmless one: her example, as an industrious and enterprising member of society, was worthy of imitation. She was an excellent mother, a good neighbour, and an admirable wife; but the duties arising out of these different relations of life were all made subservient to, and mixed up with, her great principle of advancing herself in the world, whilst that which is to come never engaged one moment's serious consideration.

When Father Mulcahy came to administer the rites of the Church to Ellish, he found her in a state of incoherency. Occasional gleams of reason broke out through the cloud that obscured her intellect, but they carried with them the marks of a mind knit indissolubly to wealth and aggrandizement. The same tenor of thought, and the same broken fragments of ambitious speculation, floated in rapid confusion through the tempests of delirium which swept with awful darkness over her spirit.

"Mrs. Connell," said he, "can you collect yourself? Strive to compose your mind, so far as to be able to receive the aids of religion."

"Oh, oh!—my blood's boilin'! Is that—is that Father Mulcahy?"

"It is, dear: strive now to keep your mind calm, till you prepare yourself for judgment."

"Keep up his head, Paddy, keep up his head, or he'll be smothered undther the wather an' the sludge. Here, Mike, take his rope: pull

man, pull—*wanim an diowol!*—pull, or the horse will be lost! Oh my head!—I'm boilin'—I'm burnin'!"

"Mrs. Connell, let me entreat you to remember that you are on the point of death, and should raise your heart to God, for the pardon and remission of your sins."

"Oh! father dear, I neglected that, but I intinded—I intinded—Where's Pether?—bring, bring—Pether to me!"

"Turn your thoughts to God now, my dear. Are you clear enough in your mind for confession?"

"I am, father; I am, avourneen. Come, come here, Pether! Pether, I'm goin' to lave you, asthore machree! I could part wid them all but—but *you*."

"Mrs. Connell, for heaven's sake ——"

"Is this—is this—Father Mulcahy? Oh, I'm ill—ill ——"

"It is, dear—it is. Compose yourself, and confess your sins."

"Where's Mary? She'll neglect—neglect to lay in a stock o' linen, although I—I——Oh, father, avourneen! won't you pity me? I'm sick, oh, I'm very sick!"

"You are, dear—you are, God help you, very sick, but you'll be better soon. Could you confess, dear?—do you think you could?"

"Oh, this pain—this pain!—it's killin' me!—Pether—Pether, *a suillish machree*,[1] have you des—have you desarted me?"

The priest, conjecturing that if Peter made his appearance she might feel soothed, and perhaps sufficiently composed to confess, called him in from the next room.

"Here's Peter," said the priest, presenting him to her view—"here's Peter, dear."

"Oh! what a load is on me!—this pain—this pain—is killin' me—won't you bring me Pether? Oh, what will I do? Who's there?"

The mental pangs of poor Peter were, perhaps, equal in intensity to those which she suffered physically.

"Ellish," said he, in smothered sobs—"Ellish, acushla machree, sure I'm wid you here; here I'm sittin' on the bed wid you, achora machree."

"Catch my hand, thin. Ah, Pether! won't you pity your Ellish?—Won't you pity me—won't you pity me? Oh! this pain—this pain—is killin' me!"

"It is, it is, my heart's delight—it's killin' us both. Oh, Ellish, Ellish! I wish I was dead sooner nor see you in this agony. I ever loved you!—I ever an' always loved you, avourneen dheelish;—but now I would give my heart's best blood, if it ud save you. Here's Father Mulcahy come."

"About the mon—about the money—Pether—what do you intind ——Oh! my blood—my blood's a-fire!—Mother o' heaven!—Oh! this pain is—is takin' me from all—ALL!—Rise me up!"

"Here, my darlin'—treasure o' my heart—here—I'm puttin' your head upon my breast—upon *my* breast, Ellish, a hagur. Marciful

[1] The light of my heart.

Virgin—Father dear," said Peter, bursting into bitter tears—"her head's like fire! Oh, Ellish, Ellish, Ellish!—but my heart's brakin' to feel this! Have marcy on her, sweet God—have marcy on her! Bear witness, Father of heaven—bear witness, an' hear the vow of a brakin' heart. I here solemnly promise, before God, to make, if I'm spared life an' health to do it, a station on my bare feet to Lough Derg, if it plases you, sweet Father o' pity, to spare her to me this day! Oh, but the hand o' God, Father dear, is terrible!—feel her brow!—oh! but it's terrible!"

"It *is* terrible," said the priest, "and terribly is it laid upon her, poor woman! Peter, do not let this scene be lost. Remember it."

"Oh, father dear, can I ever forget it?—can I ever forget seein' my darlin' in sich agony?"

"Pether," said the sick woman, "will you get the car ready for to-mor—to-morrow—till I look at that piece o' land that Dan bought, before he—he closes the bargain?"

"Father, jewel!" said Peter, "can't you get the world banished out of her heart? Oh, I'd give all I'm worth to see that heart fixed upon God! I could bear to part wid her, for she must die some time; but to go wid this world's thoughts and timptations ragin' strong in her heart—mockin' God, an' hope, an' religion, an' everything!—oh! that I can't bear! Sweet Jasus, change her heart!—Queen o' heaven, have pity on her, an' save her!"

The husband wept with great sorrow as he uttered these words.

"Neither reasoning nor admonition can avail her," replied the priest; "she is so incoherent that no train of thought is continued for a single minute in her mind. I will, however, address her again. Mrs. Connell, will you make a struggle to pay attention to me for a few minutes? Are you not afraid to meet God? You are about to die!—prepare yourself for judgment."

"Oh, father dear! I can't—I can't—I *am* af—afraid—Hooh!—hooh!—*God!* You *must* do somethin' for—for me! I ne-ver done anything for myself."

"Glory be to God! that she has that much sinse, anyway," exclaimed the husband. "Father, a hagur, I trust my vow was heard."

"Well, my dear, listen to me," continued the priest—"can you not make the best confession possible? Could you calm yourself for it?"

"Pether, avick machree—Pether."

"Ellish, avourneen, I'm here!—my darlin', I *am* your vick machree, an' ever was. Oh, father! my heart's brakin'! I can't bear to part wid her. Father of heaven, pity us this day of throuble!"

"Be near me, Pether; stay wid me—I'm very lonely. Is this you, keepin' my head up?"

"It is, it is! I'll never lave you till—till ——"

"Is the carman come from Dublin wid—wid the broadcloth?"

"Father of heaven! she's gone back again!" exclaimed the husband. "Father, jewel! have you no prayers that you'd read for her? You wor ordained for these things, an' comin' from *you*, they'll have more stringth. Can you do nothin' to save my darlin'?"

"My prayers will not be wanting," said the priest: "but I am watching for an interval of sufficient calmness to hear her confession; and I very much fear that she will pass in darkness. At all events I will anoint her by-and-by. In the meantime, we must persevere a little longer; she may become easier, for it often happens that reason gets clear immediately before death."

Peter sobbed aloud, and wiped away the tears that streamed from his cheeks. At this moment her daughter and son-in-law stole in, to ascertain how she was, and whether the rites of the Church had in any degree soothed or composed her.

"Come in, Denis," said the priest to his nephew, "you may both come in. Mrs. Mulcahy, speak to your mother: let us try every remedy that might possibly bring her to a sense of her awful state."

"Is she raving still?" inquired the daughter, whose eyes were red with weeping.

The priest shook his head: "Ah, she is—she is! and I fear she will scarcely recover her reason before the judgment of heaven opens upon her!"

"Oh, thin, may the Mother of Glory forbid that!" exclaimed her daughter; "anything at all but that! Can you do nothin' for her, uncle?"

"I'm doing all I can for her, Mary," replied the priest; "I'm watching a calm moment to get her confession, if possible."

The sick woman had fallen into a momentary silence, during which she caught the bed-clothes like a child, and felt them, and seemed to handle their texture, but with such an air of vacancy as clearly manifested that no corresponding association existed in her mind.

The action was immediately understood by all present. Her daughter again burst into tears; and Peter, now almost choked with grief, pressing the sick woman to his heart, kissed her burning lips.

"Father, jewel," said the daughter, "there it is, and I feared it—*the sign*, uncle—the sign?—don't you see her gropin' the clothes? Oh, mother, darlin', darlin'!—are we goin' to lose you for ever?"

"Ellish, acushla oge machree! Ellish, Ellish—won't you spake one word to me afore you go? Won't you take one farewell of *me*—of ME, aroon, asthore, before you depart from us for ever!" exclaimed her husband.

"Feeling the bed-clothes," said the priest, "is not *always* a sign of death; I have known many to recover after it."

"Husht," said Peter, "Husht!—Mary—Mary! Come here—hould your tongues! Oh, *it's past*—it's past!—it's all past an' gone—all hope's over! Heavenly Father!"

The daughter, in a paroxysm of wild grief, clasped her mother's recumbent body in her arms, and kissed her lips with a vehemence almost frantic. "You won't go, my darlin'—is it from your own Mary that you'd go? Mary, that you loved best of all your childhre!—Mary, that you always said, an' everybody said was your own image! Oh, you won't go without one word to say you know her!"

"For heaven's sake," said Father Mulcahy, "what do you mean?—are you mad?"

"Oh! uncle dear! don't you hear?—don't you hear?—listen, an' sure you will—all hope's *gone* now—gone—gone! *The dead rattle!*—listen!—the dead rattle's in her throat!"

The priest bent his ear a moment, and distinctly heard the gurgling noise produced by the phlegm, which is termed, with wild poetical accuracy, by the peasantry—the "dead rattle," because it is the immediate and certain forerunner of death.

"True," said the priest, "too true: the last shadow of hope is gone. We must now make as much of the time as possible. Leave the room for a few minutes, till I anoint her. I will then call you in."

They accordingly withdrew, but in about fifteen or twenty minutes he once more summoned them to the bed of the dying woman.

"Come in," said he, "I have anointed her—come in, and kneel down till we offer up a Rosary to the Blessed Virgin, under the hope that she may intercede with God for her, and cause her to pass out of life happily. She was calling for you, Peter, in your absence; you had better stay with her."

"I will," said Peter, in a broken voice; "I'll stay nowhere else."

"An' I'll kneel at the bedside," said the daughter. "She was the kind mother to me, and to us all; but to me in particular. 'Twas with me she took her choice to live, when they war all striving for her. Oh," said she, taking her mother's hand between hers, and kneeling down to kiss it, "a Vahr dheelish![1] did we ever think to see you departing from us this way! snapped away without a minute's warning! If it was a long sickness, that you'd be calm and sinsible in; but to be hurried away into eternity, and your mind dark. Oh, Vahr dheelish, my heart is broke to see you this way!"

"Be calm," said the priest, "be quiet till I open the Rosary."

He then offered up the usual prayers which precede its repetition, and after having concluded them, commenced what is properly called the Rosary itself, which consists of fifteen Decades, each Decade containing the Hail Mary repeated ten times, and the Lord's prayer once.

In this manner the Decade goes round from one to another, until, as we have said above, it is repeated fifteen times; or, in all, the *Ave Marias* one hundred and sixty-five times, without variation. From the indistinct utterance, elevated voice, and rapid manner in which it is pronounced, it certainly is wild, and strongly impressed with the character of a mystic rite, or incantation, rather than with that of a calm and humble spirit, bending down in sorrow before its offended God.

When the priest repeated the first part, he paused for the response; neither the husband nor daughter, however, could find utterance.

"Denis," said he to his nephew, "do you take up the next."

His nephew complied; and, with much difficulty, Peter and his

[1] Sweet mother!

daughter were able to join in it, repeating here and there a word or two, as well as their grief and sobbings would permit them.

The heart must indeed have been an unfeeling one to which a scene like this would not have been deeply touching and impressive. The poor dying woman reclined with her head upon her husband's bosom; her daughter knelt at the bedside, with her mother's hand pressed against her lips, she herself convulsed with sorrow—the priest was in the attitude of earnest supplication, having the stole about his neck, his face and arms raised towards heaven—the son-in-law was bent over a chair, with his face buried in his hands. Nothing could exceed the deep, the powerful expression of entreaty, which marked every tone and motion of the parties, especially those of the husband and daughter. They poured an energy into the few words which they found voice to utter, and displayed such a concentration of the faculties of the soul in their wild, unregulated attitudes, and streaming, upturned eyes, as would seem to imply that their own salvation depended upon that of the beloved object before them. Their words, too, were accompanied by such expressive tokens of their attachment to her that the character of prayer was heightened by the force of the affection which they bore her. When Peter, for instance, could command himself to utter a word, he pressed his dying wife to his bosom, and raised his eyes to heaven in a manner that would melt any human heart; and the daughter, on joining occasionally in the response, pressed her mother's hand to her heart, and kissed it with her lips, conscious that the awful state of her parent had rendered more necessary the performance of the two tenderest duties connected with a child's obedience—prayer and affection.

When the son-in-law had finished his Decade, a pause followed, for there was none now to proceed but her husband or her daughter.

"Mary, dear," said the priest, "be a woman; don't let your love for your mother prevent you from performing a higher duty. Go on with the prayer—you see she is passing fast."

"I'll try, uncle," she replied—I'll try; but—but—it's hard, hard, upon me."

She commenced, and by an uncommon effort so far subdued her grief, as to render her words intelligible. Her eyes, streaming with tears, were fixed with a mixture of wildness, sorrow, and devotedness, upon the countenance of her mother, until she had completed her Decade.

Another pause ensued. It was now necessary, according to the order and form of the prayer, that Peter should commence, and offer up his supplications for the happy passage from life to eternity of her who had been his inward idol during a long period. Peter knew nothing about sentiment, or the philosophy of sorrow; but he loved his wife with the undivided power of a heart in which nature had implanted her strongest affections. He knew, too, that his wife had loved him with a strength of heart equal to his own. He loved her, and she deserved his love.

The pause, when the prayer had gone round to him, was long: those

who were present at length turned their eyes towards him, and the priest, now deeply affected, cleared his voice, and simply said "Peter," to remind him that it was his duty to proceed with the Rosary.

Peter, however, instead of uttering the prayer, burst out into a tide of irrepressible sorrow.—"Oh!" said he, enfolding her in his arms, and pressing his lips to hers: "Ellish, ahagur machree; sure when I think of all the goodness, an' kindness, an' tendherness that you showed me—whin I think of your smiles upon me, whin you wanted me to do the right, an' the innocent plans you made out to benefit me an' mine! —Oh! where was your harsh word, a villish?—Where was your cowld brow, or your bad tongue? Nothin' but goodness—nothin' but kindness, an' love, an' wisdom, ever flowed from these lips! An' now, darlin', pulse o' my broken heart! these same lips can't spake to me—these eyes don't know me—these hands don't feel me—nor your ears doesn't hear me!"

"Is—is—it *you?*" replied his wife, feebly—"is it—YOU?—come—come near me—my heart—my heart says it misses *you*—come near me!"

Peter again pressed her in an embrace, and, in doing so, unconsciously received the parting breath of a wife whose prudence and affection had saved him from poverty, and probably from such licentious crimes as later years and the progress of modern events have multiplied in this ill-fated country.

The priest, on turning round to rebuke Peter for not proceeding with the prayer, was the first who discovered that she had died; for the grief of her husband was too violent to permit him to notice anything with much accuracy.

"Peter," said he, "I beg your pardon; let me take the trouble of supporting her for a few minutes, after which I must talk to you seriously—very seriously."

The firm, authoritative tone in which the priest spoke, together with Peter's consciousness that he had acted wrongly by neglecting to join in the Rosary, induced him to retire from the bed with a rebuked air. The priest immediately laid back the head of Mrs. Connell on the pillow, and composed the features of her lifeless face with his own hands. Until this moment none of them, except himself, knew that she was dead.

"Now," continued he, "all her cares, and hopes, and speculations touching this world, are over—so is her pain; her blood will soon be cold enough, and her head will ache no more. She is dead. Grief is therefore natural; but let it be the grief of a man, Peter. Indeed, it is less painful to look upon her now than when she suffered such excessive agony. Mrs. Mulcahy, hear me! Oh, it's in vain! Well, well, it *is* but natural; for it was an unexpected and a painful death!"

The cries of her husband and daughter soon gave intimation to her servants that her pangs were over. From the servants it immediately went to the neighbours, and thus did the circle widen until it reached the furthest ends of the parish. In a short time, also, the mournful sounds of the church-bell, in slow and measured strokes, gave additional notice that a Christian soul had passed into eternity.

It is in such scenes as these that the Roman Catholic clergy knit themselves so strongly into the affections of the people. All men are naturally disposed to feel the offices of kindness and friendship more deeply when tendered at the bed of death or of sickness than under any other circumstances. Both the sick-bed and the house of death are necessarily the sphere of a priest's duty, and to render them that justice which we will ever render them, when and wheresoever it may be due, we freely grant that many shining, nay, noble instances of Christian virtue are displayed by them on such occasions.

When the violence of grief produced by Ellish's death had subsided, the priest, after giving them suitable exhortations to bear the affliction which had just befallen them with patience, told Peter that as God, through the great industry and persevering exertions of her who had then departed to another world, had blessed him abundantly with wealth and substance, it was, considering the little time which had been allowed her to repent in a satisfactory manner for her transgressions, his bounden and solemn duty to set aside a suitable portion of that wealth for the delivery of her soul from purgatory, where, he trusted, in the mercy of God, it was permitted to remain.

"Indeed, your reverence," replied Peter, "it wasn't necessary to mintion it, considherin' the way she was cut off from among us, widout even time to confess."

"But blessed be God," said the daughter, "she received the ointment at any rate, and that of itself would get her to purgatory."

"And I can answer for her," said Peter, "that she *intended*, as soon as she'd get everything properly settled for the childhre, to make her sowl."

"Ah! good intentions!" said the priest. "Did you never hear that the floor of hell is paved with good intentions? I, however, have forewarned you of your duty, and must now leave the guilt or the merit of relieving her departed spirit upon you and the other members of her family, who are all bound to leave nothing undone that may bring her from pain and fire to peace and happiness."

"Och! och! asthore, asthore! you're lyin' there—an', oh, Ellish, avourneen, could you think that I—*I*—would spare money—trash—to bring you to glory wid the angels o' heaven! No, no, father, dear. It's good, an' kind, an' thoughtful of you to put it into my head; but I didn't intind to neglect or forget it. Oh, how will I live wantin' her, father? When I rise in the mornin', a villish, where'll be your smile and your voice? We won't hear your step, nor see you as we used to do, movin' pleasantly about the place. No—you're gone, avourneen—gone—an' we'll see you and hear you no more!"

His grief was once more about to burst forth, but the priest led him out of the room, kindly chid him for the weakness of his immoderate sorrow, and after making arrangements about the celebration of mass for the dead, pressed his hand, and bade the family farewell.

The death of Ellish excited considerable surprise and much conversation in the neighbourhood. Every point of her character was discussed freely, and the comparisons instituted between her and Peter were anything but flattering to the intellect of her husband.

"An' so Ellish is whipped off, Larry," said a neighbour to one of Peter's labouring men. "Faix, an' the best feather in their wing is gone."

"Ay, sure enough, Risthard, you may say that. It was her cleverness made them what they are. She was the best manager in the three kingdoms."

"Ah, she was the woman could make a bargain. I only hope she hasn't brought the luck o' the family away wid her!"

"Why, man alive, she made the sons and daughters as clever as herself—put them up to everything. Indeed, it's quare to think of how that one woman brought them an, an' ris them to what they are!"

"They shouldn't forget themselves as they're doin', thin; for betune you an' me, they're as proud as Turks, an' God he sees it ill becomes them—sits very badly on them itself, when everybody knows that their father an' mother begun the world wid a bottle of private whisky an' half a pound of smuggled tobaccy."

"Poor Pether will break his heart, anyway. Oh, man, but she was the good wife. I'm livin' wid them goin' an seven year, an' never hard a cross word from the one to the other. It's she that had the sweet tongue all out, an' *did* manage him; but, afther all, he was worth the full o' the Royal George of her. Many a time when some poor crathur ud come to ax whisky on score *to put over*[1] some o' their friends, or for a weddin', or a christenin', maybe, an' when the wife ud refuse it, Pether ud send what whisky they wanted afther them, widout lettin' her know anything about it. An', indeed, he never lost anything by that; for if they wor to sell their cow he should be ped, in regard of the kindly way he gave it to them."

"Well, we'll see how they'll manage now that she's gone: but Pether an' the youngest daughter, Mary, is to be pitied."

"The sarra much; barrin' that they'll miss her at first from about the place. You see she has left them above the world, an' full of it. Wealth an' substance enough may they thank her for; an' that's very good comfort for sorrow, Risthard."

"Faith, sure enough, Larry. There's no lie in that, anyway!"

"Awouh! Lie! I have you about it."

Such was the view which had been taken of their respective characters through life. Yet notwithstanding that the hearts of her acquaintances never *warmed to her*—to use a significant expression current among the peasantry—as they did to Peter, still she was respected almost involuntarily for the indefatigable perseverance with which she pushed forward her own interests through life. Her funeral was accordingly a large one; and the conversation which took place at it, turning, as it necessarily did, upon her extraordinary talents and industry, was highly to the credit of her memory and virtues. Indeed, the attendance of many respectable persons, of all creeds and opinions, gave ample proof that the qualities she possessed had secured for her general respect and admiration.

[1] To put over—the *corpse* of a friend. That is, to be drunk at the wake and funeral.

Poor Peter, who was an object of great compassion, felt himself completely crushed by the death of his faithful partner. The reader knows that he had hitherto been a sober and, owing to Ellish's prudent control, an industrious man. To thought or reflection he was not, however, accustomed; he had, besides, never received any education; if his morals were correct, it was because a life of active employment kept him engaged in pursuits which repressed immorality, and separated him from those whose society and influence might have been prejudicial to him. He had scarcely known calamity, and when it occurred he was prepared for it neither by experience nor a correct view of moral duty. On the morning of his wife's funeral, such was his utter prostration both of mind and body that even his own sons, in order to resist the singular state of collapse into which he had sunk, urged him to take some spirits. He was completely passive in their hands, and complied. This had the desired effect, and he found himself able to attend the funeral. When the friends of Ellish, after the interment, assembled, as is usual, to drink and talk together, Peter, who could scarcely join in the conversation, swallowed glass after glass of punch with great rapidity. In the meantime the talk became louder and more animated; the punch, of course, began to work, and, as they sat long, it was curious to observe the singular blending of mirth and sorrow, singing and weeping, laughter, and tears which characterised this remarkable scene. Peter, after about two hours hard drinking, was not an exception to the influence of this trait of national manners. His heart having been deeply agitated was the more easily brought under the effects of contending emotions. He was naturally mirthful, and when intoxication had stimulated the current of his wonted humour, the influence of this and his recent sorrow produced such an anomalous commixture of fun and disconsolation as could seldom, out of Ireland, be seen checkering the mind of one individual.

It was in the midst of this extraordinary din that his voice was heard commanding silence in its loudest and best humoured key:

"Hould yer tongues," said he; "bad win to yees, don't you hear me wantin' to sing. Whist wid yees. Hem—och—'Rise up'—Why, thin, Phil Callaghan, you might thrate me wid more dacency, if you had gumption in you; I'm sure no one has a better right to sing first in this company nor myself; an' what's more, I *will* sing first. Hould your tongues! Hem!"

He accordingly commenced a popular song, the air of which, though simple, was touchingly mournful.

"Och, rise up, Willy Reilly, an' come alongst wid me,
I'm goin' for to go wid you, and lave this coun-ter-ee;
I'm goin' to lave my father, his castles and free lands—
An' away wint Willy Reilly, an' his own Colleen Bawn.

"Och, they wint o'er hills an' mountains, and valleys that was fair,
An' fled before her father, as you may shortly hear;
Her father followed afther wid a well-chosen armed band,
Och, an' taken was poor Reilly, an' his own Colleen Bawn."

The simple pathos of the tune, the affection implied by the words, and probably the misfortune of Willy Reilly, all overcame him. He finished the second verse with difficulty, and on attempting to commence a third he burst into tears.

"Colleen bawn!" (fair, or fair-haired, girl)—"Colleen bawn!" he exclaimed; "she's lyin' low that was *my* colleen bawn! Oh, will yees hould your tongues, an' let me think of what has happened me? She's gone: Mary, avourneen, isn't she gone from us? I'm alone, an' I'll be always lonely. Who have I now to comfort me? I know I have good childhre, neighbours; but none o' them, all of them, if they wor ten times as many, isn't aquil to her that's in the grave. Her hands won't be about me—there was tindherness in their very touch. An', of a Sunday mornin', how she'd tie an my handkerchy, for I never could rightly tie it an myself, the knot was ever an' always too many for me; but, och, och, she'd tie it an so snug an' purty wid her own hands, that I didn't look the same man! The same song was her favourite. Here's your healths; an' sure it's the first time ever we wor together that she wasn't wid us: but now, avillish, your voice is gone—you're silent an' lonely in the grave; an' why shouldn't I be sarry for the wife o' my heart that never angered me? Why shouldn't I? Ay, Mary, asthore machree, good right you have to cry afther her; she was the kind mother to you; her heart was fixed in you; there's her fatures on your face; her very eyes, an' fair hair, too, an' I'll love you, achora, ten times more nor ever, for her sake. Another favourite song of hers, God rest her, was 'Bryan O'Lynn.' Throth an' I'll sing it, so I will, for if she was livin' she'd like it.

"'Och, Brian O'Lynn, he had milk an' male,
A two-lugged porringer wantin' a tail.'

Och, my head's through other! The sarry one o' me, I bleeve, but's out o' the words, or, as they say, there's a hole in the ballad. Send round the punch, will yees? By the hole o' my coat, Parra Gastha. I'll whale you widin an inch of your life, if you don't dhrink. Send round the punch, Dan; an' give us a song, Parra Gastha. Arrah, Paddy, do you remimber—ha, ha, ha!—upon my credit, I'll never forget it, the fun we had catchin' Father Soolaghan's horse, the day he gave his shirt to the sick man in the ditch. The Lord rest his sowl in glory—ha, ha, ha!—I'll never forget it. Paddy, the song, you thief!"

"No, but tell them about that, Misther Connell."

"Throth, an' I will: but don't be *Mistherin'* me. Faith, this is the height o' good punch. You see—ha, ha, ha! You see, it was one hard summer afore I was marrid to Ellish,—mavourneen, that you war, asthore! Och, och, we are parted at last? Upon my sowl, my heart's breakin', breakin', (*weeps*); an' no wondher! But as I was sayin'—all your healths! faith, it *is* tip-top punch that—the poor man fell sick of a faver, an' sure enough, when it was known what ailed him, the neighbours built a little shed on the roadside for him, in regard, that everyone was afeard to let him into their place. Howsomever—ha, ha, ha!—Father Soolaghan was one day ridin' past upon his horse, an' seein' the

crathur lyin' undher the shed, an' a wishp o' sthraw, he pulls bridle, an' puts the spake an the poor sthranger. So, begad, it came out that the neighbours were very kind to him, an' used to hand over whatsomever they thought best for him from the back o' the ditch as well as they could.

"'My poor fellow,' said the priest, 'you're badly off for linen.'

"'Thrue for you, sir,' said the sick man. 'I never longed for anything so much in my life as I do for a clane shirt an' a glass o' whisky.'

"'The divil a glass o' whisky I have about me, but you shall have the clane shirt, you poor compassionate crathur,' said the priest, stretchin' his neck up an' down, to make sure there was no one comin' on the road—ha, ha, ha!

"Well an' good—'I have *three* shirts,' says his reverence, 'but I have only one o' them an me, an' that you shall have.'

"So the priest peels himself on the spot, an' lays his black coat and waistcoat afore him acrass the saddle, thin takin' off his shirt, he *threwn* in acrass the ditch to the sick man. Whether it was the white shirt, or the black coat danglin' about the horse's neck, the divil a one o' myself can say, but anyway, the baste tuck fright, an' made off wid Father Soolaghan, in the state I'm tellin' yees, upon his back—ha, ha, ha!

"Parra Gastha, here, an' I war goin' up at the time to do a little in the distillin' way for Tom Duggan of Aidinasamlagh, an' seen what was goin' an. So off we set, an' we splittin' our sides laughin'—ha, ha, ha—at the figure the priest cut. However, we could do no good, an' he never could pull up the horse till he came full flight to his own house, opposite the pound there below, and the whole town in convulsions when they seen him. We *gother* up his clothes, an' brought them home to him, an' a good piece o' fun we had wid him, for he loved the joke as well as any man. Well, he was the good an' charitable man, the same Father Soolaghan; but so simple that he got himself into fifty scrapes, God rest him! Och, och, she's lyin' low that often laughed at that, an' I'm here—ay, I have no one—no one that ud show me sich a warm heart as she would. (*Weeps.*) However, God's will be done. I'll sing yees a song she liked.

"'Och, Brian O'Lynn, he had milk an' male,
A two-lugged porringer wantin' a tail.'

Musha, I'm out agin—ha, ha, ha! Why, I b'lieve there's pishthrogues an me, or I'd remimber it. Bud-an-age, dhrink all of yees. Lie into the liquor, I say; don't spare it. Here, Mike, send us up another gallon. Faith, we'll make a night of it.

"'Och, three maidens a milkin' did go,
An' three maidens a milkin' did go;
An' the winds they blew high,
An' the winds they blew low,
An' they dashed their milkin' pails to an' fro.'

All your healths, childhre! Neighbours, all your healths! don't spare

what's before yees. It's long since I tuck a jorum myself, an—come, I say, plase God, we'll often meet this way, so we will. Faith, I'll take a sup from this forrid, wid a blessin'. Dhrink, I say, dhrink!"

By the time he had arrived at this pitch he was able to engross no great portion either of the conversation or attention. Almost every one present had his songs, his sorrows, his laughter, or his anecdotes, as well as himself. Every voice was loud, and every tongue busy. Intricate and entangled was the talk, which, on the present occasion, presented a union of all the extremes which the lights and shadows of the Irish character alone could exhibit under such a calamity as that which brought the friends of the deceased together.

Peter literally fulfilled his promise of taking a jorum in future. He was now his own master; and as he felt the loss of his wife deeply, he unhappily had recourse to the bottle to bury the recollection of a woman whose death left a chasm in his heart which he thought nothing but the whisky could fill up.

His transition from a life of perfect sobriety to one of habitual, nay of daily, intoxication was immediate. He could not bear to be sober; and his extraordinary bursts of affliction, even in his cups, were often calculated to draw tears from the eyes of those who witnessed them. He usually went out in the morning with a flask of whisky in his pocket, and sat down to weep behind a ditch—where, however, after having emptied his flask, he might be heard at a great distance singing the songs which Ellish in her lifetime was accustomed to love. In fact, he was generally pitied; his simplicity of character, and his benevolence of heart, which was now exercised without fear of responsibility, made him more a favourite than he ever had been. His former habits of industry were thrown aside; as he said himself, he hadn't heart to work; his farms were neglected, and but for his son-in-law, would have gone to ruin. Peter himself was sensible of this.

"Take them," said he, "into your own hands, Denis; for me, I'm not able to do anything more at them; she that kep' me up is gone, an' I'm broken down. Take them—take them into your own hands. Give me my bed, bit, an' sup, an' that's all I want."

Six months produced an incredible change in his appearance. Intemperance, whilst it shattered his strong frame, kept him in frequent exuberance of spirits; but the secret grief preyed on him within. Artificial excitement kills, but it never cures; and Peter, in the midst of his mirth and jollity, was wasting away into a shadow. His children, seeing him go down the hill of life so rapidly, consulted among each other on the best means of winning him back to sobriety. This was a difficult task, for his powers of bearing liquor were almost prodigious. He has often been known to drink so many as twenty-five, and sometimes thirty, tumblers of punch, without being taken off his legs, or rendered incapable of walking about. His friends, on considering who was most likely to recall him to a more becoming life, resolved to apply to his landlord—the gentleman whom we have already introduced to our readers. He entered warmly into their plan, and it was settled that Peter should be sent for, and induced, if

possible, to take an oath against liquor. Early the following day a liveried servant came down to inform him that his master wished to speak with him.

"To be sure," said Peter; "divil resave the man in all Europe I'd do more for than the same gintleman, if it was only on account of the regard he had for her that's gone. Come, I'll go wid you in a minute."

He accordingly returned with the flask in his hand, saying, "I never thravel widout a pocket-pistol, John. The times, you see, is not overly safe, an' the best way is to be prepared!—ha, ha, ha! Och, och! It houlds three half-pints."

"I think," observed the servant, "you had better not taste that till after your return."

"Come away, man," said Peter; "we'll talk upon it as we go along. I couldn't do really widout it. You hard that I lost Ellish?"

"Yes," replied the servant, "and I was very sorry to hear it."

"Did you attind the berrin?"

"No, but my master did," replied the man; "for, indeed, his respect for your wife was very great, Mr. Connell."

This was before ten o'clock in the forenoon, and about one in the afternoon a stout countryman was seen approaching the gentleman's house, with another man bent round his neck, where he hung precisely as a calf hangs round the shoulders of a butcher when he is carrying it to his stall.

"Good heavens!" said the owner of the mansion to his lady, "what has happened John Smith, my dear? Is he dead?"

"Dead!" said his lady, going in much alarm to the drawing-room window: "I protest I fear so, Frank. He is evidently dead! For God's sake go down and see what has befallen him."

Her husband went hastily to the hall-door, where he met Peter with his burden.

"In the name of heaven, what has happened, Connell?—what is the matter with John? Is he living or dead?"

"First, plase your honour, as I have him on my shouldhers, will you tell me where his bed is?" replied Peter. "I may as well lave him snug, as my hand's in, poor fellow. The devil's bad head he has, your honour. Faith, it's a burnin' shame, so it is, an' nothin' else—to be able to bear so little!"

The lady, children, and servants were now all assembled about the dead footman, who hung, in the meantime, very quietly round Peter's neck.

"Gracious heaven! Connell, is the man dead?" she inquired.

"Faith, thin, he is, ma'am, for awhile; but, upon my credit, it's a burnin' shame, so it is ——"

"The man is drunk, my dear," said her husband—"he's only drunk."

"—— a burnin' shame, so it is—to be able to bear no more nor about six glasses, an' the whisky good, too. Will you ordher one o' thim to show me his bed, ma'am, if you plase," continued Peter, "while he's an me? It 'ill save trouble."

"Connell is right," observed his landlord. "Gallagher, show him John's bedroom."

Peter accordingly followed another servant, who pointed out his bed, and assisted to place the vanquished footman in a somewhat easier position than that in which Peter had carried him.

"Connell," said his landlord, when he returned, "how did this happen?"

"Faith, thin, it's a burnin' shame," said Connell, "to be able only to bear ——"

"But *how* did it happen? for he has been hitherto a perfectly sober man."

"Faix, plase your honour, asy enough," replied Peter; "he begun to lecthur me about dhrinkin', so says I, 'Come an' sit down behind the hedge here, an' we'll talk it over between us;' so we went in, the two of us, a-back o' the ditch—an' he began to advise me agin dhrink, an' I began to tell him about her that's gone, sir. Well, well! och, och! no matther!—So, sir, one story, an' one pull from the bottle, brought on another, for divil a glass we had at all, sir. Faix, he's a tindher-hearted boy, anyhow; for as myself began to let the tears down, whin the bottle was near out, divil resave the morsel of him but cried afther poor Ellish as if she had been his mother. Faix, he did! An' it won't be the last sup we'll have together, plase goodness! But the best of it was, sir, that the dhrunker he got, he abused me the more for dhrinkin'. Oh, thin, but he's the pious boy when he gets a sup in his head! Faix, it's a pity ever he'd be sober, he talks so much scripthur an' devotion in his liquor!"

"Connell," said the landlord, "I am exceedingly sorry to hear that you have taken so openly and inveterately to drink as you have done ever since the death of your admirable wife. This, in fact, was what occasioned me to send for you. Come into the parlour. Don't go, my dear, perhaps *your* influence may also be necessary. Gallagher, look to Smith, and see that every attention is paid him, until he recovers the effects of his intoxication."

He then entered the parlour, where the following dialogue took place between him and Peter:—

"Connell, I am really grieved to hear that you have become latterly so incorrigible a drinker; I sent for you to-day with the hope of being able to induce you to give it up."

"Faix, your honour, it's jist what I'd expect from your father's son—kindness, an' dacency, an' devotion wor always among yees. Divil resave the family in all Europe I'd do so much for as the same family."

The gentleman and lady looked at each other, and smiled. They knew that Peter's blarney was no omen of their success in the laudable design they contemplated.

"I thank you, Peter, for your good opinion; but, in the meantime, allow me to ask what can you propose to yourself by drinking so incessantly as you do?"

"What do I propose to myself by dhrinkin', is it? Why, thin, to banish grief, your honour. Surely you'll allow that no man has rason

to complain who's able to banish the thief for two shillins a day. I reckon the whisky at first cost, so that it doesn't come to more nor that at the very outside."

"That is taking a commercial view of affliction, Connell; but you must promise me to give up drinking."

"Why, thin, upon my credit, your honour astonishes me. Is it to give up banishin' grief? I have a regard for you, sir, for many a dalins we had together; but for all that, faix, I'd be miserable for no man, barrin' for her that's gone. If I'd be so to oblage anyone, I'd do it for your family; for divil resave the family in all Europe ——"

"Easy, Connell—I am not to be palmed off in that manner; I really have a respect for the character which you bore, and wish you to recover it once more. Consider that you are disgracing yourself and your children by drinking so excessively from day to day—indeed, I am told almost from hour to hour."

"Augh! don't believe the half o' what you hear, sir. Faith, somebody has been dhrawin' your honour out. Why, I'm never dhrunk, sir; faith, I'm not."

"You will destroy your health, Connell, as well as your character; besides, you are not to be told that it is a sin, a crime against God, and an evil example to society."

"Show me the man, plase your honour, that ever seen me *incapable*. That's the proof o' the thing."

"But why do you drink at all? It is not necessary."

"An' do *you* never taste a dhrop yourself, sir, plase your honour? I'll be bound you do, sir, raise your little finger of an odd time, as well as another. Eh, ma'am? That's comin' close to his honour! An' faix, small blame to him, an' a weeshy sup o' the wine to the misthress herself, to correct the tindherness of her delicate appetite."

"Peter, this bantering must not pass: I think I have a claim upon your respect and deference. I have uniformly been *your* friend, and the friend of your children and family, but more especially of your late excellent and exemplary wife."

"Before God an' man, I acknowledge that, sir—I do—I do. But, sir, to spake sarious—it's thruth, ma'am, downright—to spake sarious, my heart's broke, an' every day it's brakin' more an' more. She's gone, sir, that used to manage me; an' now I can't turn myself to anything, barrin' the dhrink—God help me!"

"I honour you, Connell, for the attachment which you bear towards the memory of your wife, but I utterly condemn the manner in which you display it. To become a drunkard is to disgrace her memory. You know it was a character she detested."

"I know it all, sir, an' that you have thruth an' rason on your side; but, sir, you never lost a wife that you loved; an' long may you be so, I pray the heavenly Father this day! Maybe if you did, sir, plase your honour, that, wid your heart sinkin' like a stone widin you, you'd thry whether or not *something* couldn't rise it. Sir, only for the dhrink I'd be dead."

"There I totally differ from you, Connell. The drink only prolongs

your grief, by adding to it the depression of spirits which it always produces. Had you not become a drinker, you would long before this have been once more a cheerful, active, and industrious man. Your sorrow would have worn away gradually, and nothing but an agreeable melancholy—an affectionate remembrance of your excellent wife—would have remained. Look at other men."

"But where's the man, sir, had *sich* a wife to grieve for as she was? Don't be hard on me, sir. I'm not a dhrunkard. It's thrue I dhrink a great dale; but thin I can bear a great dale, so that I'm never incapable."

"Connell," said the lady, "you will break down your constitution, and bring yourself to an earlier death than you would otherwise meet."

"I care very little, indeed, how soon I was dead, not makin' you, ma'am, an ill answer."

"Oh, fie, Connell, for you, a sensible man and a Christian, to talk in such a manner!"

"Throth, thin, I don't, ma'am. *She's* gone, an' I'd be glad to folly her as soon as I could. Yes, asthore, you're departed from me! an' now I'm gone asthray—out o' the right, an' out o' the good! Oh, ma'am," he proceeded, whilst the tears rolled fast down his cheeks, "if you knew her—her last words too—Oh, she was—she was—but where's the use o' sayin' what she was?—I beg your pardon, ma'am—your honour, sir, 'll forgive my want o' manners; sure I know it's bad breedin', but I can't help it."

"Well, promise," said his landlord, "to give up drink. Indeed, I wish you would take an oath against it: you are a conscientious man, and I know would keep it, otherwise I should not propose it, for I discountenance such oaths generally. Will you promise me this, Connell?"

"I'll promise to think of it, your honour—aginst takin' a sartin quantity, at any rate."

"If you refuse it, I'll think you are unmindful of the good feeling which we have ever shown your family."

"What?—do you think, sir, I'm ungrateful to you? That's a sore cut, sir, to make a villain o' me. Where's the book?—I'll swear this minute. Have you a Bible, ma'am?—I'll show you that I'm not mane, anyway."

"No, Connell, you shall not do it rashly; you must be cool and composed: but go home, and turn it in your mind," she replied; "and remember, that it is the request of me and my husband for your own good."

"Neither must you swear before me," said his landlord, "but before Mr. Mulcahy, who, as it is an oath connected with your moral conduct, is the best person to be present. It must be voluntary, however. Now, good-bye, Connell, and think of what we said; but take care never to carry home any of my servants in the same plight in which you put John Smith, to-day."

"Faix, thin, sir, *he* had no business, wid your honour's livery upon

his back, to begin lecthurin' me agin dhrinkin' as he did. We may all do very well, sir, till the timptation crasses us—but that's what thries us. It thried him, but he didn't *stand* it—faix, he didn't!—ha, ha, ha! Good mornin', sir—God bless you, ma'am! Divil resave the family in all Europe ——"

"Good morning, Connell—good morning! Pray remember what we said."

Peter, however, could not relinquish the whisky. His sons, daughters, friends and neighbours all assailed him, but with no success. He either bantered them in his usual way, or reverted to his loss, and sank in sorrow. This last was the condition in which they found him most intractable; for a man is never considered to be in a state that admits of reasoning or argument when he is known to be pressed by strong gushes of personal feeling. A plan at length struck Father Mulcahy, which he resolved to put into immediate execution.

"Peter," said he, "if you do not abandon drink, I shall stop the masses which I'm offering up for the repose of your wife's soul, and I will also return you the money I received for saying them."

This was perhaps the only point on which Peter was accessible. He felt staggered at such an unexpected intimation, and was for some time silent.

"You will then feel," added the priest, "that your drunkenness is prolonging the sufferings of your wife, and that *she* is as much concerned in your being sober as you are yourself."

"I *will* give in," replied Peter; "I didn't see the thing in that light. No—I will not be drunk; but if I swear aginst it, you must allow me a rasonable share every day, an' I'll not go beyant it, of coorse. The thruth is I'd die soon if I gev it up altogether."

"We have certainly no objection against that," said the priest, "provided you keep within what would not injure your health, or make you tipsy. Your drunkenness is not only sinful but disreputable; besides, you must not throw a slur upon the character of your children, who hold respectable and rising situations in the world."

"No," said Peter, in a kind of soliloquy, "I'd lay down my life, avourneen, sooner nor I'd cause you a minute's sufferin'. Father Mulcahy, go an wid the masses. I'll get an oath drawn up, an' whin it's done, I'll swear to it. I know a man that'll do it for me."

The priest then departed, quite satisfied with having accomplished his object; and Peter, in the course of that evening, directed his steps to the house of the village schoolmaster, for the purpose of getting him to "draw up" the intended oath.

"Misther O'Flaherty," said he, "I'm comin' to ax a requist of you, an' I hope you'll grant it to me. I brought down a sup in this flask, an' while we're takin' it we can talk over what I want."

"If it be anything widin the circumference of my power, set it down, Misther Connell, as already operated upon. I'd drop a pen to no man at keepin' books by double enthry, which is the Italian method invinted by Pope Gregory the Great. The three sets bear a theologi-

cal ratio to the three states of a thrue Christiar 'The waste-book,' says Pope Gregory, 'is this world, the journal is purgatory, an' the ledger is heaven. Or it may be compared,' he says, in the priface of the work, 'to the three states of the Catholic Church—the Church Militant, the Church Suffering, and the Church Triumphant.' The larnin' of that man was beyant the reach of credibility."

"Arra, have you a small glass, masther? You see, Misther O'Flaherty, it's consarnin' purgatory, this that I want to talk about."

"Nancy, get us a glass—oh, here it is! Thin if it be, it's a wrong enthry in the journal."

"Here's your health, masther!—Not forgetting you, Mrs. O'Flaherty. No, indeed, thin it's not in the journal, but an oath I'm goin' to take aginst liquor."

"Nothin' is asier to post than it is. We must enter it under the head of—let me see!—it must go in the *spirit* account, undher the head of Profit an' Loss. Your good health, Mr. Connell!—Nancy, I drink to your improvement in imperturbability! Yes, it must be enthered undher the ——"

"Faix, undher *the rose*, I think," observed Peter; "don't you know the smack of it? You see since I tuck to it, I like the smell o' what I used to squeeze out o' the barley myself long ago. Misther O'Flaherty, I only want you to dhraw up an oath aginst liquor for me; but it's not for the books, good or bad. I promised to Father Mulcahy that I'd do it. It's regardin' my poor Ellish's sowl in purgatory."

"Nancy, hand me a slate an' cutter. Faith, the same's a provident resolution; but how is it an' purgatory concatenated?"

"The priest, you see, won't go an wid the masses for her till I take the oath."

"That's but wake logic, if you ped him for thim."

"Faix, an' I did—an' well, too;—but about the oath? Have you the pencil?"

"I have; jist lave the thing to me."

"Asy, masther—you don't undherstand it yit. Put down two tumblers for me at home."

"How is that, Misther Connell?—It's mysterious, if you're about to swear *aginst* liquor!"

"I am. Put down, as I said, two tumblers for me at home. Are they down?"

"They are down; but ——"

"Asy!—very good! Put down two more for me at Dan's. Let me see!—two more behind the garden. Well!—put down one at Father Mulcahy's;—two more at Frank Carroll's, of Kildlay. How many's that?"

"Nine!!!"

"Very good. Now put down one wid ould Bartle Gorman, of Nurchasy; an' two over wid Michael Morris, of Cargah. How many have you now?"

"Twelve in all!!!! But, Misther Connell, there's a demonstration badly wanted here: I must confiss I was always bright, but at

present I'm as dark as Nox. I'd thank you for a taste of explanation."

"Asy, man alive! Is there twelve in all?"

"Twelve in all: I've calculated them."

"Well, we'll hould to that. Och, och!—I'm sure, avourneen, afore I'd let you suffer one minute's pain, I'd not scruple to take an oath aginst liquor, anyway. He may go an wid the masses now for you, as soon as he likes! Mr. O'Flaherty, will you put that down on paper, an' I'll swear to it, wid a blessin', to-morrow."

"But what object do you wish to effectuate by this?"

"You see, masther, I dhrink one day wid another from a score to two dozen tumblers, an' I want to swear to no more nor twelve in the twenty-four hours."

"Why, there's intelligibility in *that!*—Wid great pleasure, Mr. Connell, I'll indite it. Katty, tare me a lafe out o' Brian Murphy's copy there."

"You see, masther, it's for Ellish's sake I'm doin' this. State that in the oath."

"I know it; an' well she desarved that specimen of abstinence from you, Misther Connell. Thank you!—your health agin! an' God grant you grace and fortitude to go through wid the same oath! —An' so he will, or I'm grievously mistaken in you."

"*OATH AGAINST LIQUOR*

made by me, Cornelius O'Flaherty, Philomath, on behalf of Misther Pether O'Connell, of the Cross-roads, Merchant, on one part—and of the soul of Mrs. Ellish O'Connell, now in purgatory, Merchantess, on the other.

"I solemnly, and meritoriously, and soberly swear that a single tumbler of whisky punch shall not cross my lips during the twenty-four hours of the day, barring *twelve*, the locality of which is as followeth:—

Imprimis—Two tumblers at home	2
Secundo—Two more ditto at my son Dan's	2
Tertio—Two more ditto behind my own garden	2
Quarto—One ditto at the Reverend Father Mulcahy's	1
Quinto—Two more ditto at Frank Carroll's, of Kilclay	2
Sexto—One ditto wid ould Bartle Gorman, of Nurchasy	1
Septimo—Two more ditto wid Michael Morris, of Cargah	2
	12

"N.B. I except in case any Docthor of Physic might think it right and medical to ordher me *more* for my health; or in case I could get Father Mulcahy to take the oath off me for a start at a wedding or a christening, or at any other meeting of friends where there's drink.

his
"Pether × O'Connell.
mark.

"Witness present,
"Cornelius O'Flaherty, Philomath.
"*June the 4th*, 18—.

"☞ I certify that I have made and calculated this oath for Misther Pether O'Connell, Merchant, and that it is strictly and arithmetically proper and correct.
"Cornelius O'Flaherty, Philomath.

"*Dated this 4th day of June*, 18—."

"I think, Misther O'Flaherty, it's a dacent oath as it stands. Plase God I'll swear to it some time to-morrow *evenin'*."

"Dacent! Why I don't wish to become eulogistically addicted; but I'd back the same oath, for both grammar and arithmetic, aginst any that ever was drawn up by a lawyer—ay, by Counsellor O'Connell himself!—but faith, I'd not face him at a vow, for all that; he's the greatest man at a vow in the three kingdoms."

"I'll tell you what I'm thinkin', masther—as my hand's in, mightn't I as well take another wid an ould frind o' mine, Andy Cavanagh, of Lisbuy? He's a dacent ould residenther, an' likes it. It'll make the baker's, or the long dozen."

"Why, it's not a bad thought; but won't thirteen get into your head?"

"No, nor three more to the back o' that. I only begin to get hearty about seventeen; so that the long dozen, afther all, is best; for God he knows I've a regard for Andy Cavanagh this many a year, an' I wouldn't wish to lave him out."

"Very well—I'll add it up to the other part of the oath.

Octavo—One ditto out of respect for dacent Andy Cavanagh of Lisbuy..... 1

Now I must make the total amount thirteen, an' all will be right."

"Masther, have you a prayer-book widin?—bekase if you have I may as well swear it here, an' you can witness it."

"Katty, hand over the *Spiritual* Exercises—a book aquil to the Bible itself for piety an' devotion."

"Sure they say, masther, any book that the name o' God's in is good for an oath. Now, wid the help o' goodness, repate the words afore me, an' I'll sware thim."

O'Flaherty hemmed two or three times, and complied with Peter's wishes, who followed him in the words until the oath was concluded. He then kissed the book, and expressed himself much at ease, as well, he said, upon the account of Ellish's soul, as for the sake of his children.

For some time after this his oath was the standing jest of the neighbourhood: even to this day Peter Connell's oath against liquor is a proverb in that part of the country. Immediately after he had sworn, no one could ever perceive that he violated it in the slightest degree; but there could be no doubt as to his literally fulfilling it. A day never passed in which he did not punctually pay a friendly visit to those whose names were dotted down, with whom he sat, pulled out his flask, and drank his quantum. In the meantime the poor man was breaking down rapidly; so much so that his appearance generally excited pity, if not sorrow, among his neighbours. His character became simpler every day, and his intellect evidently more exhausted. The inoffensive humour, for which he had been noted, was also completely on the wane; his eye was dim, his step feeble, but the benevolence of his heart never failed him. Many acts of his private generosity are well known, and still remembered with gratitude.

In proportion as the strength of his mind and constitution diminished so did his capacity for bearing liquor. When he first bound himself by the oath not to exceed the long dozen, such was his vigour that the effects of thirteen tumblers could scarcely be perceived on him. This state of health, however, did not last. As he wore away, the influence of so much liquor was becoming stronger, until at length he found that it was more than he could bear, that he frequently confounded the names of the men, and the number of tumblers mentioned in the oath, and sometimes took, in his route, persons and places not to be found in it at all. This grieved him, and he resolved to wait upon O'Flaherty, for the purpose of having some means devised of guiding him during his potations.

"Masther," said he, "we must thry an' make this oath somethin' plainer. You see, whin I get confused, I'm not able to remimber things as I ought. Sometimes, instid o' one tumbler, I take two at the wrong place; an' sarra bit o' me but called in an' had three wid ould Jack Rogers, that isn't in it at all. On another day I had a couple wid honest Barny Casey, an my way acrass to Bartle Gorman's. I'm not what I was, masther, ahagur; so I'd thank you to dhraw it out more clearer, if you can, nor it was."

"I see, Mr. Connell; I comprehend, wid the greatest ase in life, the very plan for it. We must reduce the oath to Geography, for I'm at home there, bein' a surveyor myself. I'll lay down a map o' the parish, an' draw the houses of your friends at their proper places, so that you'll never be out o' your latitude at all."

"Faix, I doubt *that*, masther!—ha, ha, ha!" replied Peter. "I'm afeard I will, of an odd time, for I'm not able to carry what I used to do; but no matther: thry what you can do for me this time, anyhow. I think I could bear the long dozen still, if I didn't make mistakes."

O'Flaherty accordingly set himself to work; and as his knowledge, not only of the parish, but of every person and house in it, was accurate, he soon had a tolerably correct skeleton map of it drawn for Peter's use.

"Now," said he, "lend me your ears."

"Faix, I'll do no sich thing," replied Peter—"I know a thrick worth two of it. Lend you my ears, inagh!—catch me at it! You have a bigger pair of your own nor I have—ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, in other words, pay attintion. Now, see this dot—that's your own house."

"Put a crass there," said Peter, "an thin I'll know it's the crass-roads."

"Upon my reputation, you're right; an' that's what I call a good specimen of ingenuity. I'll take the hint from that, an' we'll make it a hieroglyphical as well as a geographical oath. Well, there's a crass, wid two tumblers. Is that clear?"

"It is, it is! Go an."

"Now here we draw a line to your son Dan's. Let me see; he keeps a mill, an' sells cloth. Very good. I'll draw a mill-wheel an' a yard-wand. There's two tumblers. Will you know that?"

"I see it: go an', nothin' can be clearer. So far I can't go asthray."

"Well, what next? Two behind your own garden. What metaphor for the garden? Let me see!—let me cogitate! A dragon—the Hesperides! That's beyant *you*. A bit of a hedge will do, an' a gate."

"Don't put a gate in, it's not lucky. You know when a man takes to dhrink, they say he's goin' a grey gate, or black gate, or a bad gate. Put that out, an' make the hedge longer, an' it'll do—wid the two tumblers, though."

"They're down. One at the Reverend Father Mulcahy's. How will we thranslate the priest?"

"Faix, I doubt that will be a difficquilt business."

"Upon my reputation, I agree wid you in that, especially whin he repates Latin. However, we'll see. He writes P. P. afther his name; —pee-pee is what we call the turkeys wid. What ud you think o' two turkeys?"

"The priest would like them roasted, but I couldn't undherstand that. No; put down the sign o' the horsewhip or the cudgel; for he's handy an' argues well wid both?"

"Good! I'll put down the horsewhip first, an' the cudgel alongside of it; then the tumbler, an' there 'ill be the sign o' the priest."

"Ay, do, masther, an' faix the priest 'ill be complate—there can be no mistakin' him thin. Devil a one but that's a good thought!"

"There it is in black an' white. Who comes next? Frank Carroll. He's a farmer. I'll put down a spade an' a harrow. Well, that's done —two tumblers."

"I won't mistake that aither. It's clear enough."

"Bartle Gorman's of Nurchasy. Bartle's a little lame, an' uses a staff wid a cross on the end that he houlds in his hand. I'll put down a staff wid a cross on it."

"Would there be no danger of me mistakin' that for the priest's cudgel?"

"Not the slightest. I'll pledge my knowledge of geography they're two very different weapons."

"Well, put it down—I'll know it."

"Michael Morris of Cargah. What for him? Michael's a pig-driver. I'll put down a pig. You'll comprehend that?"

"I ought; for many a pig I sould him in my day. Put down the pig; an' if you could put two black spots upon his back, I'd know it to be one I sould him about four years agone—the fattest ever was in the country—it had to be brought home on a car, for it wasn't able to walk wid fat."

"Very good; the spots are on it. The last is Andy Cavanagh of Lisbuy. Now, do you see that I've drawn a line from place to place, so that you have nothing to do only to keep to it as you go. What for Andy?"

"Andy! Let me see—Andy! Pooh! What's come over me that I've nothing for Andy? Ay! I have it. He's a horse-jockey: put down a grey mare I sould him about five years agone."

"I'll put down a horse ; but I can't make a grey mare wid black ink."

"Well, make a mare of her, anyway."

"Faith, an' that same puzzles me. Stop, I have it ; I'll put a foal along wid her."

"As good as the bank. God bless you, Misther O'Flaherty. I think this'll keep me from mistakes. An' now, if you'll slip up to me afther dusk, I'll send you down a couple of bottles and a flitch. Sure you desarve more for the throuble you tuck."

Many of our readers, particularly of our English readers, will be somewhat startled to hear that, except the change of names and places, there is actually little exaggeration in the form of this oath ; so just is the observation that the romance of truth frequently far exceeds that of fiction.

Peter had, however, overrated his own strength in supposing that he could bear the long dozen in future ; ere many months passed he was scarcely able to reach the half of that number without sinking into intoxication. Whilst in this state, he was in the habit of going to the graveyard in which his wife lay buried, where he sat, and wept like a child, sang her favourite songs, or knelt and offered up his prayers for the repose of her soul. None ever mocked him for this ; on the contrary, there was always some kind person to assist him home. And as he staggered on, instead of sneers and ridicule, one might hear such expressions as these :—

"Poor Pether ! he's nearly off ; an' a dacent, kind neighbour he ever was. The death of the wife broke his heart—he never ris his head since."

"Ay, poor man ! God pity him ! He'll soon be sleepin' beside her, beyant there, where she's lyin'. It was never known of Pether Connell that he offinded man, woman, or child since he was born, barrin' the gaugers, bad luck to thim, afore he was marrid—but *that* was no offince. Sowl, he was *their* match, anyhow. When he an' the wife's gone, they won't lave their likes behind them. The sons are *bodaghs*—gintlemen, now ; an' it's nothin' but dinners an' company. Ahagur, that wasn't the way their hardworkin' father an' mother made the money that they're houldin' their heads up wid such consequence upon."

The children, however, did not give Peter up as hopeless. Father Mulcahy, too, once more assailed him on his weak side. One morning, when he was sober, nervous, and depressed, the priest arrived, and finding him at home, addressed him as follows :—

"Peter, I'm sorry, and vexed, and angry this morning ; and you are the cause o' it."

"How is that, your reverence?" said Peter. "God help me," he added, "don't be hard an me, sir, for I'm to be pitied. Don't be hard an me for the short time I'll be here. I know it won't be long—I'll be wid *her* soon. Asthore machree, we'll be together, I hope, afore long—an', oh ! if it was the will o' God, I would be glad it was afore night !"

The poor shattered, heartbroken creature wept bitterly ; for he felt

somewhat sensible of the justice of the reproof which he expected from the priest, as well as undiminished sorrow for his wife.

"I'm not going to be hard on you," said the good-natured priest; "I only called to tell you a dream that your son Dan had last night about you and his mother."

"About Ellish! Oh, for heaven's sake, what about her, father, avourneen?"

"She appeared to him last night," replied Father Mulcahy, "and told him that your drinking kept her out of happiness."

"Queen of heaven!" exclaimed Peter, deeply affected, "is that true? Oh," said he, dropping on his knees, "father, ahagur machree, pardon me—oh, forgive me! I now promise, solemnly and seriously, to drink neither *in* the house nor *out* of it, for the time to come, not one drop at all, good, bad, or indifferent, of either whisky, wine, or punch—barrin' one glass. Are you now satisfied? an' do you think she'll get to happiness?"

"All will be well, I trust," said the priest. "I shall mention this to Dan and the rest, and depend upon it, they, too, will be happy to hear it."

"Here's what Mr. O'Flaherty an' myself made up," said Peter; "burn it, father; take it out of my sight, for it's now no use to me."

"What is this at all?" said Mr. Mulcahy, looking into it. "Is it an oath?"

"It's the joggraphy of one I swore some time ago; but it's now out of date—I'm done wid it."

The priest could not avoid smiling when he perused it, and on getting from Peter's lips an explanation of the hieroglyphics, he laughed heartily at the ingenious shifts they had made to guide his memory.

Peter, for some time after this, confined himself to one glass, as he had promised; but he felt such depression and feebleness that he ventured slowly, and by degrees, to *enlarge* the "glass" from which he drank. His impression touching the happiness of his wife was that, as he had for several months strictly observed his promise, she had probably during that period gone to heaven. He then began to exercise his ingenuity gradually, as we have said, by using, from time to time, a glass larger than the preceding one; thus receding from the spirit of his vow to the letter, and increasing the quantity of his drink from a small glass to the most capacious tumbler he could find. The manner in which he drank this was highly illustrative of the customs which prevail on this subject in Ireland. He remembered that in making the vow he used the words, "neither *in* the house nor *out* of it;" but in order to get over this dilemma, he usually stood with one foot outside the threshold, and the other in the house, keeping himself in that position which would render it difficult to determine whether he was either out or in. At other times, when he happened to be upstairs, he usually thrust one half of his person out of the window, with the same ludicrous intention of keeping the letter of his vow.

Many a smile this adroitness of his occasioned to the lookers-on;

but further ridicule was checked by his woe-begone and afflicted look. He was now a mere skeleton, feeble and tottering.

One night in the depth of winter he went into the town where his two sons resided; he had been ill in mind and body during the day, and he fancied that change of scene and society might benefit him. His daughter and son-in-law, in consequence of his illness, watched him so closely that he could not succeed in getting his usual "glass." This offended him, and he escaped without their knowledge to the son who kept the inn. On arriving there, he went up stairs, and by a *douceur* to the waiter got a large tumbler filled with spirits. The lingering influences of a conscience that generally felt strongly on the side of moral duty, though poorly instructed, prompted him to drink it in the usual manner, by keeping one half of his body, as nearly as he could guess, out of the window, that it might be said he drank it neither in nor out of the house. He had scarcely finished his draught, however, when he lost his balance, and was precipitated upon the pavement. The crash of his fall was heard in the bar, and his son, who had just come in, ran, along with several others, to ascertain what had happened. They found him, however, only severely stunned. He was immediately brought in, and medical aid sent for; but, though he recovered from the immediate effects of the fall, the shock it gave to his broken constitution, and his excessive grief, carried him off a few months afterwards. He expired in the arms of his son and daughter, and amidst the tears of those who knew his simplicity of character, his goodness of heart, and his attachment to the wife by whose death that heart had been broken.

Such was the melancholy end of the honest and warm-hearted Peter Connell, who, unhappily, was not a solitary instance of a man driven to habits of intoxication and neglect of business by the force of sorrow, which time and a well-regulated mind might otherwise have overcome. We have held him up, on the one hand, as an example worthy of imitation in that industry and steadiness which, under the direction of his wife, raised him from poverty to independence and wealth; and, on the other, as a man resorting to the use of spirituous liquors that he might be enabled to support affliction—a course which, so far from having sustained him under it, shattered his constitution, shortened his life, and destroyed his happiness. In conclusion, we wish our countrymen of Peter's class would imitate him in his better qualities, and try to avoid his failings.

AN ESSAY ON IRISH SWEARING.

NO pen can do justice to the extravagance and frolic inseparable from the character of the Irish people ; nor has any system of philosophy been discovered that can with moral fitness be applied to them. Phrenology fails to explain it, for according to the most capital surveys hitherto made and reported on, it appears that, inasmuch as the moral and intellectual organs of Irishmen predominate over the physical and sensual, the people ought therefore to be ranked at the very tip-top of morality. We would warn the phrenologists, however, not to be too sanguine in drawing inferences from an examination of Paddy's head. Heaven only knows the scenes in which it is engaged, and the protuberances created by a long life of hard fighting. Many an organ and development is brought out on it by the cudgel, thatnever would have appeared had Nature been left to herself.

Drinking, fighting, and swearing are the three great characteristics of every people. Paddy's love of fighting and of whisky has been long proverbial ; and of his tact in swearing much has also been said. But there is one department of oath-making in which he stands unrivalled and unapproachable : I mean the *alibi*. There is where he shines, where his oath, instead of being a mere matter of fact or opinion, rises up into the dignity of epic narrative, containing within itself all the complexity of machinery, harmony of parts, and fertility of invention by which your true epic should be characterised.

The Englishman, whom we will call the historian in swearing, will depose to the truth of this or that fact, but there the line is drawn : he swears his oath so far as he knows, and stands still. "I'm sure, for my part, I don't know ; I've said all I knows about it," and beyond this his besotted intellect goeth not.

The Scotchman, on the other hand, who is the metaphysician in swearing, sometimes borders on equivocation. He decidedly goes further than the Englishman, not because he has less honesty, but more prudence. He will assent to, or deny, a proposition ; for the Englishman's "I don't know," and the Scotchman's "I dinna ken," are two very distinct assertions when properly understood. The former stands out a monument of dulness, an insuperable barrier against inquiry, ingenuity, and fancy ; but the latter frequently stretches itself so as to embrace hypothetically a particular opinion.

But Paddy !—Put *him* forward to prove an alibi for his fourteenth or fifteenth cousin, and you will be gratified by the pomp, pride, and circumstance of true swearing. Every oath with him *is* an epic—pure poetry, abounding with humour, pathos, and the highest order of invention and talent. He is not at ease, it is true, under *facts ;* there is something too commonplace in dealing with them, which his genius

scorns. But his flights—his flights are beautiful; and his episodes admirable and happy. In fact, he is an *improvisatore* at oath-taking; with this difference, that his *extempore* oaths possess all the ease and correctness of labour and design.

He is not, however, *altogether* averse to facts; but like your true poet, he veils, changes, and modifies them with such skill that they possess all the merit and graces of fiction. If he happen to make an assertion incompatible with the plan of the piece, his genius acquires fresh energy, enables him to widen the design, and to create new machinery, with such happiness of adaptation, that what appeared out of proportion or character is made in his hands to contribute to the general strength and beauty of the oath.

'Tis true, there is nothing perfect under the sun; but if there were, it would certainly be Paddy at an *alibi*. Some flaws, no doubt, occur; some slight inaccuracies may be noticed by a critical eye; an occasional anachronism stands out, and a mistake or so in geography; but let it be recollected that Paddy's *alibi* is but a human production; let us not judge him by harsher rules than those which we apply to Homer, Virgil, or Shakespeare.

"Aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus," is allowed on all hands. Virgil made Dido and Æneas contemporary, though they were not so; and Shakespeare, by the creative power of his genius, changed an inland town into a sea-port. Come, come, have bowels. Let epic swearing be treated with the same courtesy shown to epic poetry, that is, if both are the production of a rare genius. I maintain that when Paddy commits a blemish he is too harshly admonished for it. When he soars out of sight here, as occasionally happens, does he not frequently alight somewhere about Sidney Bay, much against his own inclination? And if he puts forth a hasty production, is he not compelled for the space of seven or fourteen years to revise his oath? But, indeed, few works of fiction are properly encouraged in Ireland.

It would be unpardonable in us, however, to overlook the beneficial effects of Paddy's peculiar genius in swearing *alibis*. Some persons, who display their own egregious ignorance of morality, may be disposed to think that it tends to lessen the obligation of an oath, by inducing a habit among the people of swearing to what is not true. We look upon such persons as very dangerous to Ireland and to the repeal of the Union; and we request them not to push their principles too far in the disturbed parts of the country. Could society hold together a single day, if nothing but truth were *spoken?* Would not law and lawyers soon become obsolete, if nothing but truth were *sworn?* What would become of parliament if truth alone were uttered there? Its annual proceedings might be despatched in a month. Fiction is the basis of society, the bond of commercial prosperity, the channel of communication between nation and nation, and not unfrequently the interpreter between a man and his own conscience.

For these, and many other reasons which we could adduce, we say with Paddy, "Long life to fiction!" When associated with swearing, it shines in its brightest colours. What, for instance, is calculated to

produce the best and purest of the moral virtues so beautifully as the swearing an *alibi?* Here are fortitude and a love of freedom resisting oppression ; for it is well known that all law is oppression in Ireland.

There is compassion for the peculiar state of the poor boy who, perhaps, *only* burnt a family in their beds ; benevolence to prompt the generous effort in his behalf ; disinterestedness to run the risk of becoming an involuntary absentee ; fortitude in encountering a host of brazen-faced lawyers ; patience under the unsparing gripe of a cross-examiner ; perseverance in conducting the oath to its close against a host of difficulties ; and friendship, which bottoms and crowns them all.

Paddy's merits, however, touching the alibi, rest not here. Fiction on these occasions only teaches him how to perform a *duty*. It may be that he is under the obligation of a previous oath *not* to give evidence *against* certain of his friends and associates. Now, could anything in the whole circle of religion or ethics be conceived that renders the epic style of swearing so incumbent upon Paddy? There is a kind of moral fitness in all things ; for where the necessity of invention exists, it is consolatory to reflect that the ability to invent is bestowed along with it.

Next to the alibi come Paddy's powers in sustaining a cross-examination. Many persons think that this is his *forte ;* but we cannot yield to such an opinion, nor compromise his originality of conception in the scope and plan of an alibi. It is marked by a minuteness of touch and a peculiarity of expression which give it every appearance of real life. The circumstances are so well imagined, the groups so naturally disposed, the colouring so finished, and the background in such fine perspective, that the whole picture presents you with such keeping and *vraisemblance* as could be accomplished only by the genius of a master.

In point of interest, however, we must admit that his ability in a cross-examination ranks next to his skill in *planning* an alibi. There is, in the former, a versatility of talent that keeps him always ready ; a happiness of retort, generally disastrous to the wit of the most established cross-examiner ; an apparent simplicity, which is quite as inpenetrable as the lawyer's assurance ; a *vis comica*, which puts the court in tears ; and an originality of sorrow that often convulses it with laughter. His resources, when he is pressed, are inexhaustible ; and the address with which he contrives to gain time, that he may suit his reply to the object of his evidence, is beyond all praise. And yet his appearance when he mounts the table is anything but prepossessing ; a sheepish look, and a loose-jointed frame of body, wrapped in a frieze great-coat, do not promise much. Nay, there is often a rueful, blank expression in his visage, which might lead a stranger to anticipate nothing but blunders and dulness. This, however, is hypocrisy of the first water. Just observe the tact with which he places his caubeen upon the table, his kippeen across it, and the experienced air with which he pulls up the waistband of his breeches, absolutely girding his loins for battle. 'Tis true his blue eye has at

present nothing remarkable in it, except a drop or two of the native: but that is *not* remarkable.

When the direct examination has been concluded, nothing can be finer than the simplicity with which he turns round to the lawyer who is to cross-examine him. Yet, as if conscious that firmness and caution are his main guards, he again pulls up his waistband with a more vigorous hitch, looks shyly into the very eyes of his opponent, and awaits the first blow.

The question at length comes; and Paddy, after having raised the collar of his big coat on his shoulder, and twisted up the shoulder along with it, directly puts the query back to the lawyer, without altering a syllable of it, for the purpose of ascertaining more accurately whether that is the precise question that has been put to him; for Paddy is conscientious. Then is the science displayed on both sides. The one a veteran, trained in all the technicalities of legal puzzles, irony, blarney, sarcasm, impudence, stock jokes, quirks, rigmarolery, brow-beating, ridicule, and subtilty; the other a poor peasant, relying only upon the justice of a good cause and the gifts of nature, without either experience or learning, and with nothing but his native modesty to meet the forensic effrontery of his antagonist.

Our readers will perceive that the odds are a thousand to one against Paddy; yet, when he replies to a hackneyed genius at cross-examination, how does it happen that he uniformly elicits those roars of laughter which rise in the court, and convulse it from the judge to the crier? In this laugh, which is usually at the expense of the cross-examiner, Paddy himself always joins, so that the counsel has the double satisfaction of being made not only the jest of the judge and his brother lawyers, but of the ragged witness whom he attempted to make ridiculous.

It is not impossible that this merry mode of dispensing justice may somewhat encourage Paddy in that independence of mind which relishes not the idea of being altogether bound by oaths that are too often administered with a jocular spirit. To many of the uninitiated Irish an oath is a solemn, to some an awful thing. Of this wholesome reverence for its sanction, two or three testimonies given in a court of justice usually cure them. The indifferent, business-like manner in which the oaths are put, the sing-song tone of voice, the rapid utterance of the words, give to this solemn act an appearance of excellent burlesque, which ultimately renders the whole proceedings remarkable for the absence of truth and reality; but, at the same time, gives them unquestionable merit as a dramatic representation, abounding with fiction, well related, and ably acted.

Thumb-kissing is another feature in Paddy's adroitness too important to be passed over in silence. Here his tact shines out again. It would be impossible for him in many cases to meet the perplexities of a cross-examination so cleverly as he does, if he did not believe that he had, by kissing his thumb instead of the book, actually taken no oath, and consequently given to himself a wider range of action. We must admit, however, that this very circumstance involves him in

difficulties which are sometimes peculiarly embarrassing. Taking everything into consideration, the prospect of freedom for his sixth cousin, the consciousness of having kissed his thumb, or the consoling reflection that he swore only on a *Law* Bible, it must be granted that the opportunities presented by a cross-examination are well calculated to diplay his wit, humour, and fertility of invention. He is accordingly great in it; but still we maintain that his execution of an *alibi* is his ablest performance, comprising, as it does, both the conception and construction of the work.

Both the oaths and imprecations of the Irish display, like those who use them, indications of great cruelty and great humour. Many of the former exhibit that ingenuity which comes out when Paddy is on his cross-examination in a court of justice. Every people, it is true, have resorted to the habit of mutilating or changing in their oaths the letters which form the Creator's name; but we question if any have surpassed the Irish in the cleverness with which they accomplish it. Mock oaths are habitual to Irishmen in ordinary conversation; but the use of any or all of them is not considered to constitute an oath; on the contrary, they are in the mouths of many who would not, except upon a very solemn occasion indeed, swear by the name of the Deity in its proper form.

The ingenuity of their mock oaths is sufficient to occasion much perplexity to anyone disposed to consider it in connection with the character and moral feelings of the people. Whether to note it as a reluctance on their part to incur the guilt of an oath, or as a proof of habitual tact in evading it by artifice, is manifestly a difficulty hard to be overcome. We are decidedly inclined to the former; for although there is much laxity of principle among Irishmen, naturally to be expected from men whose moral state has been neglected by the legislature, and deteriorated by political and religious asperity, acting upon quick passions and badly regulated minds—yet we know that they possess, after all, a strong but vague undirected sense of devotional feeling and reverence, which are associated with great crimes and awfully dark shades of character. This explains one chief cause of the sympathy which is felt in Ireland for criminals from whom the law exacts the fatal penalty of death; and it also accounts, independently of the existence of any illegal association, for the terrible retribution inflicted upon those who come forward to prosecute them. It is not in Ireland with criminals as in other countries, where the character of a murderer or incendiary is notoriously bad, as resulting from a life of gradual profligacy and villainy. Far from it. In Ireland you will find those crimes perpetrated by men who are good fathers, good husbands, good sons, and good neighbours—by men who would share their last morsel or their last shilling with a fellow-creature in distress—who would generously lose their lives for a man who had obliged them, provided he had not incurred their enmity—and who would protect a defenceless stranger as far as lay in their power.

There are some mock oaths among Irishmen which must have had their origin amongst those whose habits of thought were much more

elevated than could be supposed to characterise the lower orders. "By the powers of death" is never now used as we have written it; but the ludicrous travesty of it, "By the powdhers o' delf," is quite common. Of this and other mock oaths it may be right to observe that those who swear by them are in general ignorant of their proper origin. There are some, however, of this description whose original form is well known. One of these Paddy displays considerable ingenuity in using. "By the cross" can scarcely be classed under the mock oaths; but the manner in which it is pressed into asseverations is amusing. When Paddy is affirming a truth he swears "by the crass" simply, and this with him is an oath of considerable obligation. He generally, in order to render it more impressive, accompanies it with suitable action, that is, he places the forefinger of each hand across, that he may assail you through two senses instead of one. On the contrary, when he intends to hoax you by asserting what is not true, he ingeniously multiplies the oath, and swears "by the five crasses," that is by his own five fingers, placing at the same time his four fingers and his thumbs across each other in a most impressive and vehement manner. Don't believe him then—the knave is lying as fast as possible, and with no remorse. "By the crass o' Christ" is an oath of much solemnity, and seldom used in a falsehood. Paddy also often places two bits of straw across, and sometimes two sticks, upon which he swears with an appearance of great heat and sincerity—*sed caveto*.

Irishmen generally consider iron as a sacred metal. In the interior of the country the thieves (but few in number) are frequently averse to stealing it. Why it possesses this hold upon their affections it is difficult to say, but it is certain that they rank it among their sacred things; consider that to find it is lucky, and nail it over their doors when found in the convenient shape of a horse-shoe. It is also used as a medium of asserting truth. We believe, however, that the sanction it imposes is not very strong. "By this blessed iron!"—"By this blessed an' holy iron!" are oaths of an inferior grade; but if the circumstance on which they are founded be a matter of indifference, they seldom depart from truth in using them.

We have said, in a former part of these "Traits and Stories," that Paddy, when engaged in a fight, is never at a loss for a weapon, and we may also affirm that he is never at a loss for an oath. When relating a narrative, or some other circumstance of his own invention, if contradicted, he will corroborate it, in order to sustain his credit or produce the proper impression, by an abrupt oath upon the first object he can seize. "Arrah, nonsense! by this pipe in my hand, it's as thrue as"—and then, before he completes the illustration, he goes on with a fine specimen of equivocation—"By the stool I'm sittin' an, *it is;* an' what more would you have from me, barrin' I take my book oath of it?" Thus does he, under the mask of an insinuation, induce you to believe that he has actually sworn it, whereas the oath is always left undefined and incomplete.

Sometimes he is exceedingly comprehensive in his adjurations, and

swears upon a magnificent scale; as, for instance—"By the contints of all the books that ever wor opened an' shut, it's as thrue as the sun to the dial." This certainly leaves "the five crasses" immeasurably behind. However, be cautious, and not too confident in taking so sweeping and learned an oath upon trust, notwithstanding its imposing effect. We grant, indeed, that an oath which comprehends within its scope all the learned libraries of Europe, including even the Alexandrian of old, is not only an erudite one, but establishes in a high degree the taste of the swearer, and displays on his part an uncommon grasp of intellect. Still we recommend you, whenever you hear an alleged fact substantiated by it, to set your ear as sharply as possible; for, after all, it is more than probable that every book by which he has sworn might be contained in a nutshell. The secret may be briefly explained. Paddy is in the habit of substituting the word *n*ever for ever. "By all the books that *n*ever were opened or shut," the reader perceives, is only a flourish of trumpets—a mere delusion of the enemy.

In fact, Paddy has oaths rising gradually from the lying ludicrous to the superstitious solemn, each of which finely illustrates the nature of the subject to which it is applied. When he swears "by the contints o' Moll Kelly's Primer," or, "by the piper that played afore Moses," you are perhaps as strongly inclined to believe him as when he draws upon a more serious oath; that is, you almost regret the thing is not the gospel that Paddy asserts it to be. In the former sense, the humorous narrative which calls forth the laughable burlesque of "By the piper o' Moses," is usually the richest lie in the whole range of fiction.

Paddy is, in his ejaculatory, as well as in all his other mock oaths, a kind of smuggler in morality, imposing as often as he can upon his own conscience, and upon those who exercise spiritual authority over him. Perhaps more of his oaths are blood-stained than would be found among the inhabitants of all Christendom put together.

Paddy's oaths in his amours are generally rich specimens of humorous knavery and cunning. It occasionally happens—but for the honour of our virtuous countrywomen, we say but rarely—that by the honey of his flattering and delusive tongue he succeeds in placing some unsuspecting girl's reputation in rather a hazardous predicament. When the priest comes to investigate the affair, and to cause him to make compensation to the innocent creature who suffered by his blandishments, it is almost uniformly ascertained that, in order to satisfy her scruples as to the honesty of his promises, he had sworn marriage to her *on a book of ballads!!!* In other cases *blank books* have been used for the same purpose.

If, however, you wish to pin Paddy up in a corner, get him a relic, a Catholic prayer-book, or a Douay Bible to swear upon. Here is where the fox– notwithstanding all his turnings and windings upon heretic Bibles, books of ballads, or mock oaths—is caught at last. The strongest principle in him is superstition. It may be found as the prime mover in his best and worst actions. An atrocious man, who is

superstitious, will perform many good and charitable actions, with a hope that their merit in the sight of God may cancel the guilt of his crimes. On the other hand, a good man, who is superstitiously the slave of his religious opinions, will lend himself to those illegal combinations whose object is, by keeping ready a system of organized opposition to an heretical government, to fulfil, if a political crisis should render it practicable, the absurd prophecies of Pastorini and Columbkill. Although the prophecies of the former would appear to be out of date to a rational reader, yet Paddy, who can see farther into prophecy than any rational reader, honestly believes that Pastorini has left, for those who are superstitiously given, sufficient range of expectation in several parts of his work.

We might enumerate many other oaths in frequent use among the peasantry; but as our object is not to detail them at full length, we trust that those already specified may be considered sufficient to enable our readers to get a fuller insight into their character, and their moral influence upon the people.

The next thing which occurs to us in connection with the present subject is *cursing;* and here again Paddy holds the first place. His imprecations are often full, bitter, and intense. Indeed, there is more poetry and epigrammatic point in them than in those of any other country in the world.

We find it a difficult thing to enumerate the Irish curses so as to do justice to a subject so varied and so liable to be shifted and improved by the fertile genius of those who send them abroad. Indeed, to reduce them into order and method would be a task of considerable difficulty. Every occasion, and every fit of passion, frequently produce a new curse, perhaps equal in bitterness to any that has gone before it.

Many of the Irish imprecations are difficult to be understood, having their origin in some historical event, or in poetical metaphors that require a considerable process of reasoning to explain them. Of this two-fold class is that general one—"The curse of Cromwell on you!" which means, may you suffer all that a tyrant like Cromwell would inflict! and "The curse o' the crows upon you!" which is probably an allusion to the Danish invasion—a raven being the symbol of Denmark; or it may be tantamount to "May you rot on the hills, that the crows may feed upon your carcase!" Perhaps it may thus be understood to imprecate death upon you or some member of your house—alluding to the superstition of rooks hovering over the habitations of the sick, when the malady with which they are afflicted is known to be fatal. Indeed, the latter must certainly be the meaning of it, as is evident from the proverb of "Die, an' give the crow a puddin'."

"Hell's cure to you!—the devil's luck to you!—high hanging to you!—hard feeding to you!—a short coorse to you!" are all pretty intense, and generally used under provocation and passion. In these cases the curses just mentioned are directed immediately to the offensive object, and there certainly is no want of the *malus animus*

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to give them energy. It would be easy to multiply the imprecations belonging to this class among the peasantry, but the task is rather unpleasant. There are a few, however, which in consequence of their ingenuity we cannot pass over: they are, in sooth, studies for the swearer. "May you never die till you see your own funeral!" is a very beautiful specimen of the periphrasis: it simply means, may you be hanged; for he who is hanged is humorously said to be favoured with a view of that sombre spectacle, by which they mean the crowd that attends an execution. To the same purpose is "May you die wid a caper in your heel!"—"May you die in your pumps!"—"May your last dance be a hornpipe on the air!" These are all emblematic of hanging, and are uttered sometimes in jest, and occasionally in earnest. "May the grass grow before your door!" is highly imaginative and poetical. Nothing, indeed, can present the mind with a stronger or more picturesque emblem of desolation and ruin. Its malignity is terrible.

There are also mock imprecations, as well as mock oaths. Of this character are "The devil go with you and sixpence, an' thin you'll want neither money nor company!" This humorous and considerate curse is generally confined to the female sex. When Paddy happens to be in a romping mood, and teases his sweetheart too much, she usually utters it with a countenance combating with smiles and frowns, whilst she stands in the act of pinning up her dishevelled hair; her cheeks, particularly the one next Paddy, deepened into a becoming blush.

"Bad scran to you!" is another form seldom used in anger: it is the same as "Hard feeding to you!" "Bad win' to you!" is "Ill healt hto you!" it is nearly the same as "Consumin' (consumption) to you!" Two other imprecations come under this head, which we will class together because they are counterparts of each other, with this difference, that one of them is the most subtilely and intensely withering in its purport that can well be conceived. The one is that common curse, "Bad 'cess to you!" that is, bad success to you: we may identify it with "Hard fortune to you!" The other is a keen one indeed —"*Sweet* bad look to you!" Now, whether we consider the epithet sweet as bitterly ironical, or deem it as a wish that prosperity may harden the heart to the accomplishment of future damnation, as in the case of Dives, we must in either sense grant that it is an oath of powerful hatred and venom. Occasionally the curse of "Bad luck to you!" produces an admirable retort, which is pretty common. When one man applies it to another, he is answered with "*Good* look to you thin; but *may neither of thim ever happen!*"

"Six eggs to you, an' half-a-dozen o' thim rotten!" like "The divil go with you an' sixpence!" is another of those pleasantries which mostly occur in the good-humoured *badinage* between the sexes. It implies disappointment.

There is a species of imprecation prevalent among Irishmen which we may term neutral. It is ended by the word *bit*, and merely results from a habit of swearing where there is no malignity of purpose. As

Irishman, when corroborating an assertion, however true or false, will often say, "Bad luck to the bit but it is!" —"Divil fire the bit but it's thruth!"—"Damn the bit but it is!" and so on. In this form the mind is not moved, nor the passions excited; it is therefore probably the most insipid of all their imprecations.

Some of the most dreadful maledictions are to be heard among the confirmed mendicants of Ireland. The wit, the gall, and the poetry of these are uncommon. "May you melt off the earth like snow off the ditch!" is one of a high order and intense malignity; but it is not exclusively confined to mendicants, although they form that class among which it is most prevalent. Nearly related to this is "May you melt like butther before a summer sun!" These are, indeed, essentially poetical: they present the mind with appropriate imagery, and exhibit a comparison perfectly just and striking. The former we think unrivalled.

Some of the Irish imprecations would appear to have come down to us from the Ordeals. Of this class, probably, are the following: "May this be poison to me!"—"May I be roasted on red-hot iron!" Others of them, from their boldness of metaphor, seem to be of Oriental descent. One expression, indeed, is strikingly so. When a deep offence is offered to an Irishman, under such peculiar circumstances that he cannot immediately retaliate, he usually replies to his enemy—"You'll sup sorrow for this!"—"You'll curse the day it happened!"—"I'll make you rub your heels together!" All these figurative denunciations are used for the purpose of intimating the pain and agony he will compel his enemy to suffer.

We cannot omit a form of imprecation for good, which is also habitual among the peasantry of Ireland. It is certainly harmless, and argues benevolence of heart. We mean such expressions as the following: "Salvation to me!"—"May I never do harm!"—"May I never do an ill turn!"—"May I never sin!" These are generally used by men who are blameless and peaceable in their lives—simple and well-disposed in their intercourse with the world.

At the head of those Irish imprecations which are dreaded by the people, the Excommunication, of course, holds the first and most formidable place. In the eyes of every man of sense it is as absurd as it is wicked and contemptible; but to the ignorant and superstitious, who look upon it as anything but a *brutum fulmen*, it is terrible indeed.

Next in order are the curses of pilgrims, mendicants, and idiots. Of those also Paddy entertains a wholesome dread: a circumstance which the pilgrim and mendicant turn with great judgment to their own account. Many a legend and anecdote do such chroniclers relate, when the family with whom they rest for the night are all seated around the winter hearth. These are often illustrative of the baneful effects of the poor man's curse. Of course they produce a proper impression; and, accordingly, Paddy avoids offending such persons in any way that might bring him under their displeasure.

A certain class of curses much dreaded in Ireland are those of the

widow and the orphan. There is, however, something touching and beautiful in this fear of injuring the sorrowful and unprotected. It is, we are happy to say, a becoming and prominent feature in Paddy's character; for, to do him justice in his virtues as well as in his vices, we repeat that he cannot be surpassed in his humanity to the lonely widow and her helpless orphans. He will collect a number of his friends, and proceed with them in a body to plant her bit of potato ground, to reap her oats, to draw home her turf, or secure her hay. Nay, he will beguile her of her sorrows with a natural sympathy and delicacy that do him honour; his heart is open to her complaints, and his hand ever extended to assist her.

There is a strange opinion to be found in Ireland upon the subject of curses. The peasantry think that a curse, no matter how uttered, will fall on *something*, but that it depends upon the person against whom it is directed whether or not it will descend on him. A curse, we have heard them say, will rest for seven years in the air, ready to alight upon the head of the person who provoked the malediction. It hovers over him, like a kite over its prey, watching the moment when he may be abandoned by his guardian angel; if this occurs, it shoots with the rapidity of a meteor on his head, and clings to him in the shape of illness, temptation, or some other calamity.

They think, however, that the blessing of one person may cancel the curse of another; but this opinion does not affect the theory we have just mentioned. When a man experiences an unpleasant accident they will say, "He has had some poor body's curse;" and, on the contrary, when he narrowly escapes it, they say, "He has had some poor body's blessing."

There is no country in which the phrases of good-will and affection are so strong as in Ireland. The Irish language actually flows with the milk and honey of love and friendship. Sweet and palatable is it to the other sex, and sweetly can Paddy, with his deluding ways, administer it to them from the top of his mellifluous tongue, as a dove feeds her young, or as a kind mother her babe, shaping with her own pretty mouth every morsel of the delicate viands before it goes into that of the infant. In this manner does Paddy, seated behind a ditch, of a bright Sunday, when he ought to be at mass, feed up some innocent girl, not with "false music," but with sweet words, for nothing more musical or melting than his brogue ever dissolved a female heart. Indeed, it is of the danger to be apprehended from the melody of his voice that the admirable and appropriate proverb speaks; for when he addresses his sweetheart under circumstances that justify suspicion, it is generally said, "Paddy's feedin' her up wid false music."

What language has a phrase equal in beauty and tenderness to *cushla ma chree—the pulse of my heart?* Can it be paralleled in the whole range of all that are, ever were, or ever will be spoken, for music, sweetness, and a knowledge of anatomy? If Paddy is unrivalled at swearing, he fairly throws the world behind him at the blarney. In professing friendship, and making love, give him but a *taste of the*

native, and he is a walking honeycomb, that every woman who sees him wishes to have a lick at ; and heaven knows that frequently, at all times, and in all places, does he get himself *licked* on their account.

Another expression of peculiar force is *vick machree*—or, son of my heart. This is not only elegant, but affectionate beyond almost any other phrase except the foregoing. It is, in a sense somewhat different from that in which the philosophical poet has used it, a beautiful comment upon the sentiment of "the child's the father of the man," uttered by the great, we might almost say the glorious, Wordsworth.

We have seen many a youth, on more occasions than one, standing in profound affliction over the dead body of his aged father, exclaiming, "*Ahir, vick machree—vick machree—wuil thu marra wo'um? Wuil thu marra wo'um?* Father, son of my heart, son of my heart, art thou dead from me—art thou dead from me?" An expression, we think, under any circumstances, not to be surpassed in the intensity of domestic affliction which it expresses : but under those alluded to, we consider it altogether elevated in exquisite and poetic beauty above the most powerful symbols of Oriental imagery.

A third phrase peculiar to love and affection is "*Manim asthee hu*" —or, "My soul's within you." Every person acquainted with languages knows how much an idiom suffers by a literal translation. How beautiful, then, how tender and powerful, must those short expressions be, uttered, too, with a fervour of manner peculiar to a deeply-feeling people, when, even after a literal translation, they carry so much of their tenderness and energy into a language whose genius is cold when compared to the glowing beauty of the Irish.

Mavourneen dheelish, too, is only a short phrase, but coming warm and mellowed from Paddy's lips into the ear of his *colleen dhas*, it is a perfect spell—a sweet murmur to which the *lenis susurrus* of the Hybla bees is, with all their honey, jarring discord. How tame is "My sweet darling," its literal translation, compared to its soft and lulling intonations. There is a dissolving, entrancing, beguiling, deluding, flattering, insinuating, coaxing, winning, inveigling, roguish, palavering, come-over-ing, comedhering, consenting, blarneying, killing, willing, charm in it, worth all the philtres that ever the gross knavery of a withered alchymist imposed upon the credulity of those who inhabit the *other* nations of the earth—for we don't read that these shrivelled philtre-mongers ever prospered *in Ireland.*

No, no—let Paddy alone. If he hates intensely, effectually, and *inquestingly*, he loves intensely, comprehensively, and gallantly. To love with power is a proof of a large soul, and to hate well is, according to the great moralist, a thing in itself to be loved. Ireland is, therefore, through all its sects, parties, and religions, an amicable nation. Their affections are, indeed, so vivid that they scruple not to kill each other with kindness : and we very much fear that the march of love and murder will not only keep pace with, but outstrip the march of intellect.

THE POOR SCHOLAR.

ONE day about the middle of November in the year 18—, Dominick M'Evoy and his son Jemmy were digging potatoes on the side of a hard, barren hill, called Esker Dhu. The day was bitter and wintry, the men were thinly clad, and as the keen blast swept across the hill with considerable violence, the sleet-like rain which it bore along pelted into their garments with pitiless severity. The father had advanced into more than middle age; and having held, at a rack-rent, the miserable waste of farm which he occupied, he was compelled to exert himself in its cultivation despite either obduracy of soil or inclemency of weather. This day, however, was so unusually severe that the old man began to feel incapable of continuing his toil. The son bore it better; but whenever a cold rush of stormy rain came over them, both were compelled to stand with their sides against it, and their heads turned, so as that the ear almost rested back upon the shoulder, in order to throw the rain off their faces. Of each, however, that cheek which was exposed to the rain and storm was beaten into a red hue, whilst the other part of their faces was both pale and hunger-pinched.

The father paused to take breath, and, supported by his spade, looked down upon the sheltered inland, which, inhabited chiefly by Protestants and Presbyterians, lay rich and warm-looking under him.

"Why, thin," he exclaimed to the son, a lad about fifteen, "sure I know well I oughtn't to curse yees, anyway, you black set; and yit, the Lord forgive me my sins, I'm almost timpted to give yees a volley, an' that from my heart out! Look at thim, Jimmy agra—only look at the black thieves! how warm an' wealthy they sit there in our own ould possessions, an' here we must toil, till our fingers are worn to the stumps, upon this thievin' bent. The curse of Cromwell on it! You might as well ax the divil for a blessin' as expect anything like a dacent crop out of it. Look at thim two ridges!—such a poor sthring o' praties is in it!—one here and one there—and yit we must turn up the whole ridge for that same! Well, God sind the time soon whin the right will take place, Jimmy agra!"

"An' doesn't Pasthorini say it! Sure, whin Twenty-five comes, *we'll* have our own agin: the right will overcome the might—the bottomless pit will be locked—ay, double boulted, if St. Pether gets the kays, for he's the very boy that will accommodate the heretics wid a warm corner; an' yit, faith, there's many o' thim that myself ud put in a good word for, afther all."

"Throth, an' here's the same, Jimmy. There's Jack Stuart, an' if there's a cool corner in hell, the same Jack will get it—an' that he may I pray Gor this day, an' amin! The Lord sind it to him! for he

richly desarves it. Kind, neighbourly, and frindly is he an' all belongin' to him ; an' I wouldn't be where a hard word ud be spoken of him, nor a dog in connection wid the family ill thrated ; for which rason may he get a cool corner in hell, I humbly sufflicate."

"What do you think of Jack Taylor? Will he be cosy?"

"Throth I doubt so—a blessed youth is Jack ; yit I myself ud hardly wish it. He's a heerum-skeerum, divil-may-care fellow, no doubt of it, an' laughs at the priests, which same, I'm thinkin', will get him below stairs more nor a new-milk heat, anyway ; but thin, agin, he thrates thim dacent, an' gives thim good dinners, and they take all his rolliken in good part, so that it's likely he's not in arnest in it, an' surely they ought to know best, Jimmy."

"What do you think of *Yallow Sam?—honest Sam*, that they say was born widout a heart, an' carries the *black* wool in his ears, to keep out the cries of the widows an' the orphans that are long rotten in their graves through his villainy?—He'll get a snug berth!"[1]

"*Yallow Sam*," replied the old man, slowly, and a dark shade of intense hatred blackened his weather-beaten countenance as he looked in the direction from which the storm blew : "'twas *he* left us where we're standin', Jimmy—undher this blast, that's cowldher an' bittherer nor a stepmother's breath this cuttin' day? 'Twas *he* turned us on the wide world whin your poor mother was risin' out of her faver. 'Twas he squenched the hearth whin she wasn't able to lave the house, till I carried her in my arms into Paddy Cassidy's—the tears fallin' from my eyes upon her face that I loved next to God. Didn't he give our farm to a purple Orangeman? Out we went to the winds an' skies of heaven, bekase the rich *bodagh* made interest aginst us. I tould him whin he chated me out o' my fifteen goolden guineas that his masther, the landlord, should hear of it ; but I could never get next or near him to make my complaint? Eh?—a snug berth! I'm only afeard that hell has no corner hot enough for him—but lave that to the divil himself: if he doesn't give him the best thratement that hell can afford, why I'm not here."

"Divil a one o' the *ould boy's* so bad as they say, father ; he gives it to *thim* hot an' heavy, at all evints."

"Why, even if he was at a loss about Sam, depind upon it he'd get a hint from his betthers above that ud be sarviceable."

"They say he visits him as it is, and that Sam can't sleep widout someone in the room wid him. Dan Philips says the priest was there, an' had a mass in every room in the house ; but Charley Mack tells me there's no thruth in it. He was advised to it, he says ; but it seems the ould boy has too strong a hoult of him, for Sam said he'd have the divil any time sooner nor the priest, and it's likest what he would say."

"Och, och, Jimmy, avick, I'm tir'd our! We had betther give in ;

[1] This was actually said of the person alluded to—a celebrated usurer and agent to two or three estates, who was a little deaf, and had his ears occasionally stuffed with black wool.

the day's too hard, an' there's no use in standin' agin the weather that's in it. Lave the ould villain to God, who he can't chate, anyway."

"Well, may our curse go along wid the rest upon him, for dhrivin' us to sich an unnatural spot as this! Hot an' heavy, into the sowl an' marrow of him may it penethrate! An' sure that's no more than all the counthry's wishin' him, whether or not—not to mintion the curses that's risin' out o' the grave agin him, loud an' piercin'!"

"God knows it's not slavin' yourself on such a day as this *you'd* be, only for him. Had we kep our farm, you'd be now well an in your larnin' for a priest—an' there ud be one o' the family sure to be a gintleman, anyhow; but that's gone too, agra. Look at the smoke, how comfortably it rises from Jack Sullivan's, where the priest has a station to-day. 'Tisn't fishin' for a sthray pratie he is, upon a ridge like this. But it can't be helped; an' God's will be done! Not himself!—faix, it's he that'll get the height of good thratement, an' can ride home, well lined, both inside an' outside. Much good may it do him!—'tis but his right."

The lad now paused in his turn, looked down on Jack Sullivan's comfortable house, sheltered by a clump of trees, and certainly saw such a smoke tossed up from the chimney as gave unequivocal evidence of preparation for a good dinner. He next looked "behind the wind," with a visage made more blank and meagre by the contrast; after which he reflected for a few minutes, as if working up his mind to some sudden determination. The deliberation, however, was short: he struck his open hand upon the head of the spade with much animation, and instantly took it in both hands, exclaiming:

"Here, father, here goes; to the divil once an' for ever I pitch slavery,"[1] and as he spoke, the spade was sent as far from him as he had strength to throw it. "To the divil I pitch slavery! An' now, father, wid the help o' God, this is the last day's work I'll ever put my hand to. There's no way of larnin' Latin here; but off to Munster I'll start, an' my face you'll never see in this parish till I come home a priest an' a gintleman! But that's not all, father dear; I'll rise you out of your distress, or die in the struggle. I can't bear to see your grey hairs in sorrow and poverty."

"Well, Jimmy—well, agra—God enable you, avourneen; 'tis a good intintion. The divil a one o' me will turn another spadeful aither, for this day: I'm *dhrookin'*[2] wid the rain. We'll go home an' take an air o' the fire—we want it; and aftherwards we can talk about what you're *on*[3] for."

It is usual to attribute to the English and Scotch character, exclusively, a cool and persevering energy in the pursuit of such objects as inclination or interest may propose for attainment; whilst Irishmen are considered too much the creatures of impulse to reach a point that requires coolness, condensation of thought, and efforts successively repeated. This is a mistake. It is the opinion of Englishmen and Scotchmen who know not the Irish character thoroughly. The fact

[1] Toil, labour. [2] Dripping, very wet. [3] Determined on.

is, that in the attainment of an object, where a sad-faced Englishman would despair, an Irishman will, probably, laugh, drink, weep and fight during his progress to accomplish it. A Scotchman will miss it, perhaps, but, having done all that could be done, he will try another speculation. The Irishman may miss it, too ; but to console himself he would break the head of any man who may have impeded him in his efforts, as a proof that he *ought* to have succeeded ; or if he cannot manage that point, he will crack the pate of the first man he meets, or he will get drunk, or he will marry a wife, or burn a house, or hamstring a neighbour's cow, or cut the throat of a proctor, or swear a gauger never to show his face in that quarter again, or he will exclaim, if it be concerning a farm, with a countenance full of simplicity—"God bless your honour, long life and honour to you, sir! Sure an' 'twas but a thrifle, anyhow, that your reverence will make up for me another time. An' 'tis well I know your lordship ud be the last man on airth to give me the cowld shoulder, so you would, an' I an ould residenthur on your own father's estate, the Lord be praised for that same ! An' 'tis a happiness, an' nothin' else, so it is, even if I paid double rint—wherein, maybe, I'm not a day's journey from that same, manin' the double rint, yer honour ; only that one would do a great deal for the honour an' glory of livin' undher a raal gintleman—an' that's but rason."

There is, in short, a far-sightedness in an Irishman which is not properly understood, because it is difficult to understand it. I do not think there is a nation on earth, whose inhabitants mix up their interest and their feelings together more happily, shrewdly, and yet less ostensibly, than Irishmen contrive to do. An Irishman will make you laugh at his joke, while the object of that joke is wrapped up from you in the profoundest mystery, and you will consequently make the concession to a certain point of his character, which has been really obtained by a faculty you had not penetration to discover, or, rather, which he had too much sagacity to exhibit. Of course, as soon as your back is turned, the broad grin is on him, and one of his cheeks is stuck out two inches beyond the other, because his tongue is in it—at your stupidity, simplicity, or folly. Of all the characters of all the people of all nations on this habitable globe, I verily believe that that of the Irish is the most profound and unfathomable, and the most difficult on which to form a system, either social, moral, or religious. The only power equal to grapple with it is that of the Church of Rome, and certainly that lays Paddy in the dust ; there he is overreached, and *bammed*, and blarnied, and made to knock under.

It would be difficult, for example, to produce a more signal instance of energy, system, and perseverance than that exhibited in Ireland during the struggle for Emancipation. Was there not flattery to the dust? blarney to the eyes? heads broken? throats cut? houses burned? and cattle houghed? And why? Was it for the *mere pleasure* of blarney—of breaking heads (I won't dispute the last point, though, because I scorn to give up the glory of the national character,) —of cutting throats—burning houses—or houghing cattle? No ; but

to secure Emancipation. In attaining that object was exemplified the Irish method of gaining a point.

"Yes," said Jemmy, "to the divil I pitch slavery! I will come home able to rise yees from your poverty, or never show my face in the parish of Ballysogarth agin."

When the lad's determination was mentioned to his mother and the family, there was a loud and serious outcry against it; for no circumstance is relished that ever takes away a member from an Irish hearth, no matter what the nature of that circumstance may be.

"Och, thin, is it for that *bocaun*[1] of a boy to set off wid himself, runnin' through the wide world afther larnin', widout money or friends? Avourneen, put it out of yer head. No; struggle on as the rest of us is doin', and maybe ye'll come as well off at the long run."

"Mother, dear," said the son, "I wouldn't wish to go agin what you'd say; but I made a promise to myself to *rise* yees out of your poverty if I can, an' my mind's made up on it; so don't cross me, or be the manes of my havin' bad luck on my journey, in regard of me goin' aginst yer will, when you know 'twould be the last thing I'd wish to do."

"Let the gossoon take his way, Vara. Who knows but it was the Almighty put the thoughts of it into his head. Pasthorini says that there will soon be a change, an' 'tis a good skame it'll be to have him a *sogarth* when the fat livins will be walkin' back to their ould owners."

"Oh, an' may the Man above grant *that*, I pray Jamini this day! for aren't we harrished out of our lives, scrapin' an' scramblin' for the black thieves what we ought to put on our backs, an' into our own mouths. Well, they say it's not lucky to take money from a priest, because it's the price o' sin, an' no more it can, seein' that they want it themselves; but I'm sure it's *their*[2] money that *ought* to carry the bad luck to them, in regard of their gettin' so many bitther curses along wid it."

When a lad from the humblest classes resolves to go to Munster as a poor scholar, there is but one course to be pursued in preparing his outfit. This is by a collection at the chapel among the parishioners, to whom the matter is made known by the priest, from the altar, some Sunday previous to his departure. Accordingly, when the family had all given their consent to Jemmy's project, his father went, on the following day, to communicate the matter to the priest, and to solicit his co-operation in "questing," or making a collection in behalf of the lad, on the next Sunday but one; for there is always a week's notice given, and sometimes more, that the people may come prepared.

The conversation already detailed between father and son took place on Friday, and on Saturday, a day on which the priest never holds a station, and, of course, is generally at home, Dominick M'Evoy went to his house with the object already specified in view. The priest was at home; a truly benevolent man, but like the worthier of

[1] Soft, innocent person. [2] The Protestant clergy

his day, not overwhelmed with learning, though brimful of kindness and hospitality mixed up with drollery and simple cunning.

"Good morrow, Dominick," said the priest, as Dominick entered.

"Good morrow kindly, sir," replied Dominick. "I hope your reverence is well, *and* in good health."

"Throth I am, Dominick. I hope there's nothing wrong at home; how is the wife and childhre?"

"I humbly thank your reverence for aixin'. Throth there's no rason for complainin' in regard o' the health; sarra one o' them but's bravely, consitherin' all things: I blieve I'm the worst o' them myself, yer reverence. I'm gettin' ould, you see, an' stiff, an' wake; but that's only in the coorse o' nathur; a man can't last always. Wait till them that's young an' hearty *now* harrows as much as I ploughed in my day, an' they won't have much to brag of. Why, thin, but yer reverence stands it bravely—faix, wondherfully itself—the Lord be praised! an' it warms my own heart to see you look so well."

"Thank you, Dominick. Indeed, my health, God be thanked, is very good. Ellish," he added, calling to an old female servant—"you'll take a glass, Dominick, the day is cowldish—Ellish, here, take the kay, and get some spirits—the *poteen*, Ellish—to the right hand in the cupboard. Indeed, my health is very good, Dominick. Father Murray says he invies me my appetite, an' I tell him he's guilty of one of the seven deadly sins."

"Ha, ha, ha!—Faix, an' invy *is* one o' them sure enough; but a joke is a joke in the manetime. A pleasant gintleman is the same Father Murray, but yer reverence is too deep for him in the jokin' line, for all that. Ethen, sir, but it's you that gave ould Cokely the keen cut about his religion—ha, ha, ha! Myself laughed till I was sick for two days afther it—the ould thief!"

"Eh?—Did you hear that, Dominick? Are you sure that's the poteen, Ellish? Ay, an' the best of it all was that his pathrun, Lord Foxhunter, was present. Come, Dominick, try that—it never seen wather. But the best of it all was—

"'Well, Father Kavanagh,' said he, 'who put you into the Church? Now,' said he, 'you'll come over me wid your regular succession from St. Peter, but I won't allow that.'

"'Why, Mr. Cokely,' says I back to him, 'I'll give up the succession,' says I, 'and what is more, I'll grant that *you* have been *called* by the Lord, and that *I* have *not*; but the Lord that called you,' says I, 'was *Lord Foxhunter*.' Man, you'd tie his Lordship *wid* a cobweb, he laughed so heartily.

"'Bravo, Father Kavanagh,' said he. 'Cokely, you're *bate*,' said he; 'and upon my honour, you must both dine with me to-day,' says he—and capital claret he keeps."

"Your health, Father Kavanagh, an' God spare you to us! Hah! wather! Oh, the divil a taste itself did the same stuff *see*. Why, thin, I think your reverence an' me's about an age. I bleeve I'm a thrifle ouldher; but I don't bear it so well as you do. The family, you see, an' the childhre, an' the cares o' the world, pull me down;

throth, the same family's a throuble to me. I wish I had them all settled safe, anyway."

"What do you intend to do wid them, Dominick?"

"In throth, that's what brought me to yer reverence. I've one boy —Jimmy—a smart chap entirely, an' he has taken it into his head to go as a poor scholar to Munster. He's fond o' the larnin', there's not a doubt o' that, and small blame to him, to be sure; but then, again, what can I do? He's bint on goin', an' I'm not able to help him, poor fellow, in any shape; so I made bould to see yer reverence about it, in hopes that you might be able to plan out something for him more betther nor I could do. I have the good wishes of the neighbours, and indeed of the whole parish, let the thing go as it may."

"I know that, Dominick, and for the same rason we'll have a 'Quest'[1] at the three althars. I'll mintion it to them after mass to-morrow, and let them be prepared for Sunday week, when you can make the collection. Hut, man, never fear; we'll get as much as will send him half-way to the priesthood; and I'll tell you what, Dominick, I'll never be the man to refuse giving him a couple of guineas myself."

"May the heavenly Father bless an' keep your reverence. I'm sure 'tis a good right the boy has, as well as all of us, to never forget your kindness. But as to the money—he'll be proud of your assistance the other way, sir—so not a penny—'tis only your good-will we want—hem —except, indeed, that you'd wish yourself to make a piece of kindness of it to the poor boy. Oh, not a drop more, sir—I declare it'll be apt to get into my head. Well, well—sure an' we're not to disobey our clargy, whether or not: so here's your health over agin, your reverence! an' success to the poor child that's bint on good!"

"Two guineas his reverence is to give you from himself, Jimmy," said the father, on relating the success of this interview with the priest; "an' faix, I was widin one of refusin' it, for feard it might bring something *unlucky*[2] wid it: but, thought I, on the spur, it's best to take it, anyway. We can asily put it off on some o' these black-mouthed Presbytarians or Orangemen, by way of changin' it, an' if there's any hard fortune in it, let them have the full benefit of it, *ershi misha*."[3]

It is by trifles of this nature that the invincible and enduring hatred with which the religious sects of Ireland detest those of a different creed is best known. This feeling, however, is sufficiently mutual. Yet on both sides there is something more speculative than practical in its nature. When they speak of each other as a distinct class, the animosity, though abstracted, appears to be most deep; but when they mingle in the necessary intercourse of life, it is curious to see them frequently descend, on both sides, from the general rule to

[1] A charitable collection.

[2] There is a superstitious belief in some parts of Ireland that priest's money is unlucky; "because," say the people, "it is the price of sin"—alluding to absolution.

[3] Say I.

those exceptions of good-will and kindness which natural benevolence and mutual obligation, together with a correct knowledge of each other's real characters, frequently produce. This abstracted hatred has been generally the curse of our unhappy country; it has kept us too much asunder, or, when we met, exhibited us to each other in our darkest and most irritating aspects.

Dominick's conduct in the matter of the priest's money was also a happy illustration of that mixture of simplicity and shrewdness with which an Irishman can frequently make points meet, which superstition alone, without ingenuity, would keep separate for ever. Many another man might have refused the money from an ignorant dread of its proving *unlucky;* but his mode of reasoning on the subject was satisfactory to himself, and certainly the most ingenious which, according to his belief, he could have adopted.

The eloquence of a country priest, though rude, and by no means elevated, is sometimes well adapted to the end in view, to the feelings of his auditory, and to the nature of the subject on which he speaks. Pathos and humour are the two levers by which the Irish character is raised or depressed; and these are blended in a manner too anomalous to be ever properly described. Whoever could be present at a sermon on the Sunday when a Purgatorian Society is to be established would hear pathos and see grief of the first water. It is then he would get a "nate" and glowing description of Purgatory, and see the broad, humorous Milesian faces of three or four thousand persons of both sexes shaped into an expression of the most grotesque and clamorous grief. The priest, however, on particular occasions of this nature, very shrewdly gives notice of the sermon, and of the purpose for which it is to be preached: if it be grave, the people are prepared to cry; but if it be for a political or any other purpose not decidedly religious, there will be abundance of that rough, blunt satire and mirth so keenly relished by the peasantry, illustrated, too, by the most comical and ridiculous allusions. That priest, indeed, who is the best master of this latter faculty is uniformly the greatest favourite. It is no unfrequent thing to see the majority of an Irish congregation drowned in sorrow and tears, even when they are utterly ignorant of the language spoken; particularly in those districts where the Irish is still the vernacular tongue. This is what renders notice of the sermon and its purport necessary; otherwise the honest people might be seriously at a loss whether to laugh or cry.

"*Eilish, avourneen, gho dhe dirsha?*—Ellish, my dear, what is he saying?"

"*Och, musha niel eshighum, ahagur—ta sha er Purgathor, ta barlhum.*—Och, I dunna that, jewel; I believe he's on Purgatory."

"*Och, och, oh—och, och, oh—oh, i, oh, i, oh!*"

And on understanding that Purgatory is the subject, they commence their grief with a rocking motion, wringing their hands, and unconsciously passing their beads through their fingers, whilst their bodies are bent forward towards the earth.

On the contrary, when the priest gets jocular—which I should have

premised he never does in what is announced as a solemn sermon—you might observe several faces, charged with mirth and laughter, turned, even while beaming with this expression, to those who kneel beside them, inquiring :

"Arrah, Barny, what is it—ha, ha, ha !—what is it he's sayin'? The Lord spare him among us, anyhow, the darlin' of a man ! Eh, Barny, you that's in the inside o' the English ?"

Barny, however, is generally too much absorbed in the fun to become interpreter just then : but as soon as the joke is nearly heard out, in compliance with the importunity of his neighbours, he gives them a brief hint or two, and instantly the full chorus is rung out, long, loud, and jocular.

On the Sunday in question, as the subject could not be called strictly religious, the priest, who knew that a joke or two would bring in many an additional crown to Jimmy's *caubeen*, was determined that they should at least have a laugh for their money. The man, besides, was benevolent, and knew the way to the Irish heart : a knowledge which he felt happy in turning to the benefit of the lad in question.

With this object in view, he addressed the people somewhat in the following language :—

"*Blessed is he that giveth his money to him that standeth in need of it.*

"These words, my brethren, are taken from St. Paul, who, among ourselves, knew the value of a friend in distress as well as any other apostle in the three kingdoms—hem. It's a nate text, my friends, anyhow. He manes, however, when we have it to give, my own true, well-tried ould friends !—when we have it to give. Its absence althers the case in toto ; because you have all heard the proverb—'There is no takin' money out of an empty purse ;' or, as an ould ancient author said long ago upon the same subject :

"'Cantabit whackuus coram lathrone whiathur !'

—(Dshk, dshk, dshk [1]—that's the larnin' !)—He that carries an empty purse may whistle at the thief. It's *sing* in the Latin ; but sing or whistle, in my opinion, he that goes wid an empty purse seldom sings or whistles to a pleasant tune. Melancholy music I'd call it, an' wouldn't, maybe, much astray afther.—Hem. At all evints, may none of this present congregation, whin at their devotions, ever sing or whistle to the same tune ! No ; let it be to 'money in both pockets,' if you sing at all ; and as long as you have that, never fear but you'll also have the 'priest in his boots' into the bargain—[Ha, ha, ha !—God bless him, isn't he the pleasant gintleman, all out—ha, ha, ha ! —moreover, an' by the same a token, it's thrue as Gospel, so it is.]—for well I know that you're the high-spirited people, who wouldn't see —your priest without them, while a fat parson, with half a dozen chins upon him, red and rosy, goes about every day in the week bogged in boots, like a horse trooper ! —[Ha, ha, ha !—good, Father Dan ! More

[1] This sound, which expresses wonder, is produced by striking the tip of the tongue against the palate.

power to you—ha, ha, ha! We're the boys that wouldn't seen you in want o' them, sure enough. Isn't he the droll crathur?]

"But suppose a man hasn't money, what is he to do? Now this divides itself into what is called Hydrostatics an' Metaphysics and must be proved logically in the following manner:—

"First, we suppose him *not* to have the money—there I may be wrong or I may be right; now for the illustration and the logic.

"Pether Donovan."

"Here, your reverence"

"Now, Pether, if I suppose you to have *no* money, am I right, or am I wrong?"

"Why, thin, I'd be sarry to prove your reverence to be wrong, so I would; but for all that, I believe I must give it aginst you."

"How much have you got, Pether?"

"Ethen, but 'tis yer reverence that's comin' close upon me: two or three small notes an' some silver."

"How much silver, Pether?"

"I'll tell your reverence in a jiffy. I ought to have a ten shillin', barrin' the price of a quarther o' tobaccy that I bought at the crass-roads beyant. Nine shillins an' some hapuns, yer reverence."

"Very good, Pether, you must hand me the silver, till I give the rest of the illustration wid it."

"But does yer reverence mind another ould proverb?—'A fool an' his money's asy parted.' Sure an' I know you're goin' to do a joke upon me."

("Give him the money, Pether," from a hundred voices—"give his reverence the money, you nager, you—give him the silver, you dirty spalpeen, you—hand it out, you misert.")

"Pether, if you don't give it dacently, I'll not take it; and in that case ——"

"Here, here, your reverence—here it is: sure I wouldn't have your ill-will for all I'm worth."

"Why, you nager, if I wasn't the first orathor livin', barrin' Cicero or Demosthenes himself, I couldn't *schrew* a penny out o' you! Now, Pether, there's a specimen of logic for you; an' if it wasn't good, depind upon it the money would be in your pocket still. I've never known you to give a penny for any charitable purpose since ever I saw your face: but I'm doin' a good action in your behalf for once; so if you have any movin' words to say to the money in question, say them, for you'll never finger it more."

A burst of the most uproarious mirth followed this manœuvre, in which the simple priest joined heartily; whilst the melancholy of Peter's face was ludicrously contrasted with the glee which characterised those that surrounded him.

"Hem!—Secondly.—A man, you see, may have money, or he may not, when his fellow-creature who stands in need of it makes an appale to his dacency and his feelings; and sorry I'd be to think that there's a man before me, or woman either, who'd refuse to assist the distresses of anyone, of any creed, church, or persuasion, whether white, black, or

yallow. It's what I never taught you, nor never will tache you to the day of my death! To be sure, a fellow-creature may say, 'Help me, my brother, I am distressed,' or, 'I am bent on a good purpose, that your kindness can enable me to accomplish.' But suppose that you have not the money *about you at the time*, wouldn't you feel sorry to the backbone? Ay, would yees—to the very core of the heart itself. Or if any man—an' he'd be nothing else than a *bodagh* that would say it—if any man would tell me that you would not, I'd—yes—I'd give him his answer, as good as I gave to ould Cokely long ago.

"The next point is, what would you do if you hadn't it about you? It's I that can tell you what you'd do: you'd say, 'I haven't got it, brother'—for ev'ry created bein' of the human kind is your brother, barrin' the women, an' they are your sisters—[this produced a grin upon many faces]—'but,' says you, 'if you wait for a day or two, or a week, or maybe for a fortnight, I'll try what I can do to help you.'

"Picture to yourselves a fellow-creature in distress—suppose him to have neither hat, shoe, nor stocking—[this was a touch of the pathetic]—and altogether in a state of utter destitution! Can there be a more melancholy picture than this? No, there can't. But 'tisn't the tithe of it!—a barefaced robbery is the same tithe—think of him without father, mother, or friend upon the earth—maybe he has poor health—maybe he's sick, an' in a sthrange country—[here Jimmy's mother and friends sobbed aloud, and the contagion began to spread—the priest, in fact, knew where to touch]—his face is pale—his eyes sunk with sickness and sorrow in his head—his bones are cuttin' the skin—he knows not where to turn himself—hunger and sickness are strivin' for him.—[Here the grief became loud and general, and even the good-natured preacher's own voice got somewhat unsteady.]—He's in a bad state entirely—miserable! more miserable!! most miserable!!! [Och, och, oh!] sick, sore, and sorry!—he's to be pitied, felt for and compassionated!—[a general outcry]—'tis a faver he has, or an ague, maybe, or a rheumatism, or an embargo[1] on the limbs, or the king's evil, or a consumption, or a decline, or God knows but it's the falling-sickness—[Och, och, oh!—och, och, oh! from the whole congregation, whilst the simple old man's eyes were blinded with tears at the force of the picture he drew.]—Ay, maybe it's the *falling*-sickness, and in that case how on earth can he *stand* it.—[He can't, he can't, wurra strew, wurra strew!—och, och, oh!—ogh, ogh, ogh!]—The Lord in heaven look down upon him—[Amin, amin, this blessed an' holy Sunday that's in it!— och, oh!]—pity him—[Amin, amin!—och, och, an' amin!]—with miseracordial feeling and benediction! He hasn't a rap in his company!—moneyless, friendless, houseless, an' homeless! Ay, my friends, you all have homes—but *he* has none! Thrust back by every hard-hearted spalpeen, and he, maybe, a better father's son than the Turk that refuses him! Look at your own childhre, my friends! Bring the case home to yourselves! Suppose he was one of them—alone on the

[1] Lumbago, we presume.

earth, and none to pity him in his sorrows !—Your own childhre, I say, in a strange land !—[Here the outcry became astounding—men, women, and children in one general uproar of grief.]—An' this may all be Jimmy M'Evoy's case, that's going in a week or two to Munster as a poor scholar—may be his case, I say, except you befriend him, and show your *dacency* and your *feelings*, like Christians and Catholics ; and for either dacency or kindness I'd turn yees against any other congregation in the diocess, or in the kingdom—ay, or against Dublin itself, if it was convanient."

Now here was a *coup de main*—not a syllable mentioned about Jemmy M'Evoy until he had melted them down ready for the impression, which he accordingly made to his heart's content.

"Ay," he went on, "an 'tis the parish of Ballysogarth that has the name, far and near, for *both*, and well they desarve it. You won't see the poor gorsoon go to a sthrange country with empty pockets. He's the son of an honest man—one of yourselves ; and although he's a poor man, you know 'twas Yallow Sam that made him so—that put him out of his comfortable farm and slipped a *black mouth* into it. You won't turn your backs on the son in regard of *that*, anyway. As for Sam, let *him* pass ; he'll not grind the poor nor truckle to the rich when he gives up his stewardship in the kingdom come. Lave him to the friend of the poor—to his God ; but the son of them that he oppressed, you will stand up for. He's going to Munster, to learn 'to go upon the Mission ;' and on Sunday next there will be a collection made here and at the other two althars for him ; and, as your own characters are at stake, I trust it will be neither mane nor shabby. There will be Protestants here, I'll engage, and you must act dacently before them, if it was only to set them a good example. And now I'll tell yees a story that the mintion of the Protestants brings to my mind :—

"There was, you see, a Protestant man and a Catholic woman once married together. The man was a swearing, drinking, wicked rascal, and his wife the same : between them they were a blessed pair, to be sure. She never bent her knee under a priest until she was on her death-bed ; nor was he known ever to enter a church door, nor to give a shilling in charity but once, that being as follows :—He was passing a Catholic place of worship one Sunday, on his way to fowl—for he had his dog and gun with him ; 'twas beside a road, and many of the congregation were kneeling out across the way. Just as he passed they were making a collection for a poor scholar—and surely they that love the larning desarve to be encouraged ! Well, behold you—says one of them, 'Will you remember the poor scholar,' says he, 'and put something in the hat? You don't know,' says he, 'but his prayers will be before you.'[1] 'True enough, maybe,' says the man, 'and there's a crown to him, for God's sake.' Well and good—the man died, and so did the wife : but the very day before her departure she got a scapular and died in it. She had one sister, however, a good crature, that did nothing but fast and pray, and make her sowl. This woman had

[1] In the other world.

strong doubts upon her mind, and was very much troubled as to whether or not her sister went to heaven; and she begged it as a favour from the blessed Virgin that the state of her sister's sowl might be revaled to her. Her prayer was granted. One night, about a week after her death, her sister came back to her, dressed all in white, and circled round by a veil of glory.

"'Is that Mary?' said the living sister.

"'It is,' said the other; 'I have got liberty to appear to you,' says she, 'and to tell you that I'm happy.'

"'May the holy Virgin be praised!' said the other. 'Mary dear, you have taken a great weight off of me,' says she: 'I thought you'd have a bad chance, in regard of the life you led.'

"'When I died,' said the spirit, 'and was on my way to the other world, I came to a place where the road divided itself into three parts: one to heaven, another to hell, and a third to purgatory. There was a dark gulf between me and heaven, and a breach between me and purgatory that I couldn't step across, and if I had missed my foot there, I would have dropped into hell. So I would, too, only that the blessed Virgin put my own scapular over the breach, and it became firm, and I stepped on it and got over. The Virgin then desired me to look into hell, and the first person I saw was my own husband, standing with a green sod under his feet. "He got that favour," said the blessed Virgin, "in consequence of the prayers of a holy priest, that had once been a poor scholar, that he gave assistance to at a collection made for him in such a chapel," says she. Then,' continued the sowl, 'Mary,' says she, 'but there's some great change in the world since I died, or why would the people live so long? It can't be less than six thousand years since I departed, and yet I find every one of my friends just as I left them.'

"'Why,' replied the living sister, 'you're only six days dead.'

"'Ah, avourneen!' said the other, 'it can't be—it can't be! for I have been thousands on thousands of years in pain!'—and as she spoke this she disappeared.

"Now, there's *proof* of the pains of purgatory, where one day seems as long as a thousand years; and you know we oughtn't to grudge a thrifle to a fellow-crature, that we may avoid it. So you see, my friends, there's nothing like good works. You know not when or where this lad's prayers may benefit you. If he gets ordained, the first mass he says will be for his benefactors; and in every one he celebrates after that, they must also be remembered: the words are—*pro omnibus benefactoribus meis, per omnia secula seculorum!*

"Thirdly—hem—I now lave the thing to yourselves.

"But wasn't I a match for Pether Donovan, that would brake a stone fo. the marrow[1]—Eh?—[a broad laugh at Pether's rueful

I know not whether this may be considered worthy of a note or not. I have myself frequently seen and tasted what is appropriately termed by the peasantry, "Stone Marrow." It is found in the heart of a kind of soft granite, or, perhaps I should rather say, freestone. The country people use it medicinally, but I cannot remember what particular disease it is said to cure. It is a soft saponaceous sub-

visage.] — Pether, you Turk, will your heart never soften—will you never have dacency, an' you the only man of your family that's so? Sure they say you're going to be marrid some of these days. Well, if you get your wife in my parish, I tell you, Pether, I'll give you a fleecin', for don't think I'll marry you as chape as I would a poor honest man. I'll make you shell out the yallow boys, and 'tis that will go to your heart, you nager, you; and then I'll eat you out of house and home at the stations. May the Lord grant us, in the manetime, a dacent appetite, a blessing which I wish you all in the name of the," &c.

At this moment the congregation was once more in convulsions of laughter at the dressing which Peter, whose character was drawn with much truth and humour, received at the hands of the worthy pastor.

Our readers will perceive that there was not a single prejudice, or weakness, or virtue in the disposition of his auditory left untouched in this address. He moved their superstition, their pride of character, their dread of hell and purgatory, their detestation of Yellow Sam, and the remembrance of the injury so wantonly inflicted on M'Evoy's family; he glanced at the advantage to be derived from the lad's prayers, the example they should set to Protestants, made a passing hit at tithes, and indulged in the humorous, the pathetic, and the miraculous. In short, he left no avenue to their hearts untouched; and in the process by which he attempted to accomplish his object he was successful.

There is, in fact, much rude, unpolished eloquence among the Roman Catholic priesthood, and not a little which, if duly cultivated by study and a more liberal education, would deserve to be ranked very high.

We do not give this as a specimen of their *modern* pulpit eloquence, but as a sample of that in which some of those Irish clergy shone, who, before the establishment of Maynooth, were admitted to orders immediately from the hedge-schools, in consequence of the dearth of priests which then existed in Ireland. It was customary in those days to ordain them even before they departed for the Continental colleges, in order that they might, by saying masses and performing other clerical duties, be enabled to add something to the scanty pittance which was appropriated to their support. Of the class to which Father Kavanagh belonged, there are few, if any, remaining. They sometimes were called "hedge-priests,"[1] by way of reproach; though, for our own parts, we wish their non-interference in politics, unaffected piety, and simplicity of character had remained behind them.

stance, not unpleasant to the taste, of a bluish colour, and melts in the mouth like the fat of cold meat, leaving the palate greasy. How far an investigation into its nature and properties might be useful to the geologist or physician it is not for me to conjecture. As the fact appeared to be a curious one, and necessary, moreover, to illustrate the expression used in the text, I thought it not amiss to mention it. It may be a *bonne bouche* for the geologists.

[1] This nickname was first bestowed upon them by the Continental priests, who generally ridiculed them for their vulgarity. They were, for the most, part, simple but worthy men.

On the Sunday following, Dominick M'Evoy and his son Jemmy attended mass, whilst the other members of the family, with that sense of honest pride which is more strongly inherent in Irish character than is generally supposed, remained at home, from a reluctance to witness what they could not but consider a degradation. This decency of feeling was anticipated by the priest, and not overlooked by the people ; for the former, the reader may have observed, in the whole course of his address never once mentioned the word "charity ;" nor did the latter permit the circumstance to go without its reward, according to the best of their ability. So keen and delicate are the perceptions of the Irish, and so acutely alive are they to those nice distinctions of kindness and courtesy, which have in their hearts a spontaneous and sturdy growth that mocks at the stunted virtues of artificial life.

In the parish of Ballysogarth there were three altars, or places of Roman Catholic worship ; and the reader may suppose that the collection made at each place was considerable. In truth, both father and son's anticipations were far under the sum collected. Protestants and Presbyterians attended with their contributions, and those of the latter who scrupled to be present at what they considered to be an idolatrous worship did not hesitate to *send* their quota by some Roman Catholic neighbour. Their names were accordingly announced with an encomium from the priest, which never failed to excite a warm-hearted murmur of approbation. Nor was this feeling transient ; for we will venture to say that had political excitement flamed up even to rebellion and mutual slaughter, the persons and property of *those* individuals would have been held sacred.

At length Jemmy was equipped; and sad and heavy became the hearts of his parents and immediate relations as the morning appointed for his departure drew nigh. On the evening before, several of his more distant relatives came to take their farewell of him, and, in compliance with the usages of Irish hospitality, they were detained for the night. They did not, however, come empty-handed : some brought money ; some brought linen, stockings, or small presents— "Jist, Jimmy asthore, to keep *me* in yer memory, sure—an' nothin' else it is for, mavourneen."

Except Jemmy himself, and one of his brothers, who was to accompany him part of the way, none of the family slept. The mother exhibited deep sorrow, and Dominick, although he made a show of firmness, felt, now that the crisis was at hand, nearly incapable of parting with the boy. The conversation of their friends, and the cheering effects of the poteen, enabled them to sustain his loss better than they otherwise would have done, and the hope of seeing him one day "an ordained priest" contributed more than either to support them.

When the night was nearly half spent, the mother took a candle and privately withdrew to the room in which the boy slept. The youth was fair, and interesting to look upon—the clustering locks of his white forehead were divided ; yet there was on his otherwise open brow a shade of sorrow, produced by the coming separation, which even sleep

could not efface. The mother held the candle gently towards his face, shading it with one hand, lest the light might suddenly awake him; she then surveyed his features long and affectionately, whilst the tears fell in showers from her cheeks.

"There you lie," she softly sobbed out in Irish, "the sweet pulse of your mother's heart, the flower of our flock, the pride of our eyes, and the music of our hearth! Jimmy, avourneen machree, an' how can I part wid you, my darlin' son! Sure when I look at your mild face, and think that you're takin' the world on your head to *rise* us out of our poverty, isn't my heart brakin'? A lonely house we'll have afther you, acushla! Goin' out an' comin' in, at home or abroad, your voice won't be in my ears, nor your eye smilin' upon me! An' thin to think of what you may suffer in a sthrange land! If your head aches, on what tendher breast will it lie? or who will bind the ribbon of comfort[1] round it? or wipe your fair mild brow in sickness? Oh Blessed Mother, hunger, sickness, and sorrow, may come upon you, *when you'll be far from your own, an' from them that loves you?*"

This melancholy picture was too much for the tenderness of the mother; she sat down beside the bed, rested her face on her open hand, and wept in subdued but bitter grief. At this moment his father, who probably suspected the cause of her absence, came in, and perceived her distress.

"Vara," said he, in Irish also, "is my darlin' son asleep?"

She looked up with streaming eyes as he spoke, and replied to him with difficulty, whilst she involuntarily held over the candle to gratify the father's heart by a sight of him.

"I was keepin' him before my eye," she said. "God knows but it may be the last night we'll ever see him undher our own roof! Dominick, achora, I doubt I can't part wid him from my heart."

"Then how can I, Vara?" he replied. "Wasn't he my right hand in everything? When was he from me, ever since he took a man's work upon him? And when he'd finish his own task for the day, how kindly he'd begin an' help me wid mine! No, Vara, it goes to my heart to let him go away upon sich a plan, an' I wish he hadn't taken the notion into his head at all."

"It's not too late, maybe," replied his mother. "I think it wouldn't be hard to put him off of it; the crathur's own heart's failin' him to lave us—he has sorrow upon his face where he lies."

The father looked at the expression of affectionate melancholy which shaded his features as he slept; and the perception of the boy's internal struggle against his own domestic attachments in accomplishing his first determination, powerfully touched his heart.

"Vara," said he, "I know the boy—he won't give it up; and 'twould be a pity—maybe a sin—to put him from it. Let the child get fair play, an' thry his coorse. If he fails he can come back to us, an' our arms and hearts will be open to welcome him! But if God prospers

[1] This alludes to a charm performed by certain persons, which, by means of a ribbon, is said to cure headaches in Ireland. It is called "measuring the head."

him, wouldn't it be a blessin' that we never expected, to see him in the white robes, celebratin' one mass for his paarents. If these ould eyes could see that, I would be contínted to close them in pace an' happiness for ever."

"An' well you'd become them, avourneen machree! Well would your mild and handsome countenance look wid the long heavenly stole of innocence upon you! and although it's atin' into my heart, I'll bear it for the sake of seein' the same blessed sight. Look at that face, Dominick; mightn't many a lord of the land be proud to have such a son? May the heavens shower down its blessin' upon him!"

The father burst into tears. "It is—it is!" said he. "It is the face that ud make many a noble heart proud to look at it! Is it any wondher it ud cut *our* hearts, thin, to have it taken from afore our eyes? Come away, Vara—come away, or I'll not be able to part wid it. It *is* the lovely face—an' kind is the heart of my darlin' child." As he spoke he stooped down and kissed the youth's cheek, on which the warm tears of affection fell soft as the dew from heaven. The mother followed his example, and they both left the room.

"We must bear it," said Dominick, as they passed into another apartment; "the money's gathered, an' it wouldn't look well to be goin' back wid it to them that befrinded us. *We'd* have the blush upon our face for it, an' the child no advantage."

"Thrue for you, Dominick; and we must make up our minds to live widout him for a while."

The following morning was dark and cloudy, but calm and without rain. When the family were all assembled, every member of it evinced traces of deep feeling, and every eye was fixed upon the serene but melancholy countenance of the boy with tenderness and sorrow. He himself maintained a quiet equanimity, which, though apparently liable to be broken by the struggles of domestic affection, and in character with his meek and unassuming disposition, yet was supported by more firmness than might be expected from a mind in which kindness and sensibility were so strongly predominant. At this time, however, his character was not developed, or, at least, not understood by those that surrounded him. To strong feelings and enduring affections he added a keenness of perception and a bitterness of invective, of which, in his conversation with his father concerning Yellow Sam, the reader has already had sufficient proofs. At breakfast little or nothing was eaten; the boy himself could not taste a morsel, nor any other person in the family. When the form of the meal was over, the father knelt down. "It's right," said he, "that we should all go to our knees, and join in a Rosary in behalf of the child that's goin' on a good intintion. He won't thrive the worse bekase the last words that he'll hear from his father and mother's lips is a prayer for bringin' the blessin' of God down upon his endayvours."

This was accordingly performed, though not without tears and sobs, and frequent demonstrations of grief; for religion among the peasantry is often associated with bursts of deep and powerful feeling.

When the prayer was over, the boy rose and calmly strapped to his

back a satchel covered with deer-skin, containing a few books, linen, and a change of very plain apparel. While engaged in this, the uproar of grief in the house was perfectly heartrending. When just ready to set out, he reverently took off his hat, knelt down, and, with tears streaming from his eyes, craved humbly and meekly the blessing and forgiveness of his father and mother. The mother caught him in her arms, kissed his lips, and kneeling also, sobbed out a fervent benediction upon his head; the father now, in the grief of a strong man pressed him to his heart, until the big, burning tears fell upon the boy's face; his brothers and sisters embraced him wildly; next his more distant relations; and lastly the neighbours who were crowded about the door. After this he took a light staff in his hand, and, first blessing himself after the form of his Church, proceeded to a strange land in quest of education.

He had not gone more than a few perches from the door, when his mother followed him with a small bottle of holy water. "Jimmy, *a lanna voght*,"[1] said she, "here's this, an' carry it about you—it will keep evil from you; an' be sure to take good care of the written correckther you got from the priest and Square Benson; an', darlin', don't be lookin' too often at the cuff o' your coat, for feard the people might get a notion that you have the bank-notes sewed in it. An', Jimmy agra, don't be too lavish upon their Munster crame; they say it's apt to give people the ague. Kiss me agin, agra; an' the heavens above keep you safe and well till we see you once more!"

She then tenderly, and still with melancholy pride, settled his shirt collar, which she thought did not sit well about his neck: and kissing him again, with renewed sorrow, left him to pursue his journey.

M'Evoy's house was situated on the side of a dark hill—one of that barren description which can be called neither inland nor mountain. It commanded a wide and extended prospect, and the road along which the lad travelled was visible for a considerable distance from it. On a small hillock before the door sat Dominick and his wife, who, as long as their son was visible, kept their eyes, which were nearly blinded with tears, riveted upon his person. It was now they gave full vent to their grief, and discussed, with painful and melancholy satisfaction, all the excellent qualities which he possessed. As James himself advanced, one neighbour after another fell away from the train which accompanied him, not, however, until they had affectionately embraced and bid him adieu, and, perhaps, slipped with peculiar delicacy an additional mite into his waistcoat pocket. After the neighbours, then followed the gradual separation from his friends—one by one left him, as in the great journey of life, and in a few hours he found himself accompanied only by his favourite brother.

This to him was the greatest trial he had yet felt; long and heartrending was their embrace. Jemmy soothed and comforted his beloved brother, but in vain. The lad threw himself on the spot at which they parted, and remained there until Jemmy turned an angle

[1] My poor child.

of the road which brought him out of his sight, when the poor boy kissed the marks of his brother's feet repeatedly, and then returned home, hoarse and broken down with the violence of his grief.

He was now alone, and for the first time felt keenly the strange object on which he was bent, together with all the difficulties connected with its attainment. He was young and uneducated, and many years, he knew, must elapse ere he could find himself in possession of his wishes. But time would pass at home, as well as abroad, he thought; and as there lay no impediment of peculiar difficulty in his way, he collected all his firmness and proceeded.

There is no country on the earth in which either education, or the desire to procure it, is so much reverenced as in Ireland. Next to the claims of the priest and schoolmaster come those of the poor scholar for the respect of the people. It matters not how poor or how miserable he may be; so long as they see him struggling with poverty in the prosecution of a purpose so laudable, they will treat him with attention and kindness. Here there is no danger of his being sent to the workhouse, committed as a vagrant, or passed from parish to parish, until he reaches his own settlement. Here the humble lad is not met by the sneer of purse-proud insolence, or his simple tale answered only by the frown of heartless contempt. No—no—no. The best bit and sup are placed before him; and whilst his poor but warm-hearted entertainer can afford only potatoes and salt to his own half-starved family, he will make a struggle to procure something better for the poor scholar, "*bekase he's far from his own, the crathur!* An' sure the intintion in him is good, anyhow; the Lord prosper him, an' everyone that has the heart set upon the larnin'!"

As Jemmy proceeded, he found that his satchel of books and apparel gave as clear an intimation of his purpose as if he had carried a label to that effect upon his back.

"God save you, a bouchal!" said a warm, honest-looking countryman, whom he met driving home his cows in the evening, within a few miles of the town in which he purposed to sleep.

"God save you kindly!"

"Why, thin, 'tis a long journey you have before you, alanna, for I know well it's for Munster you're bound."

"Thrue for you, 'tis there, wid the help of God, I'm goin'. A great scarcity of larnin' was in my own place, or I wouldn't have to go at all," said the boy, whilst his eyes filled with tears.

"'Tis no discredit in life," replied the countryman, with untaught natural delicacy, for he perceived that a sense of pride lingered about the boy, which made the character of poor scholar sit painfully upon him; "'tis no discredit, dear, nor don't be cast down. I'll warrant you that God will prosper you; an' that he may, avick, I pray this day!" and as he spoke, he raised his hat in reverence to the Being whom he invoked. "An' tell me, dear—where do you intend to sleep to-night?"

"In the town forrid here," replied Jemmy. "I'm in hopes I'll be able to reach it before dark."

"Pooh! asy you will. Have you any friends or acquaintances there that ud welcome you, *a bouchal dhas* (my handsome boy)?"

"No, indeed," said Jemmy, "they're all strangers to me; but I can stop in 'dhry lodgin',' for it's chaper."

"Well, alanna, I believe you; but *I'm no stranger to you*—so come home wid me to-night; where you'll get a good bed, an' betther thratement nor in any of their dhry lodgins. Give me your books, an' I'll carry them for you. Ethen, but you have a great batch o' them entirely. Can you make any hand o' the Latin at all yet?"

"No, indeed," replied Jemmy, somewhat sorrowfully; "I didn't ever open a Latin book, at all at all."

"Well, acushla, everything has a beginnin'; you won't be so. An' I know by your face that you'll be bright at it, an' a credit to them that owes[1] you. There's my house in the fields beyant, where you'll be well kept for one night, anyway, or for twinty, or for ten times twinty, if you wanted them."

The honest farmer then commenced the song of *Colleen dhas Crotha na Mho*,[2] which he sang in a clear, mellow voice, until they reached the house.

"Alley," said the man to his wife, on entering, "here's a stranger I've brought you."

"Well," replied Alley, "he's welcome sure, anyway. *Kead millia failta ghud*, alanna! sit over to the fire. Brian, get up, dear," said she to one of the children, "an' let the stranger to the hob."

"He's goin' on a good errand, the Lord bless him!" said the husband; "up the country for the larnin'. Put thim books over on the settle; an' whin the *girshas* are done milkin', give him a brave dhrink of the sweet milk; it's the stuff to thravel on."

"Throth, an' I will, wid a heart an' a half, wishin' it was betther I had to give him. Here, Nelly, put down a pot o' wather, an' lave soap an' a *praskeen*, afore you go to milk, till I bathe the dacent boy's feet. Sore an' tired they are after his journey, poor young crathur."

When Jemmy placed himself upon the hob, he saw that some peculiarly good fortune had conducted him to so comfortable a resting-place. He considered this as a good omen, and felt, in fact, much relieved, for the sense of loneliness among strangers was removed.

The house evidently belonged to a wealthy farmer, well to do in the world; the chimney was studded with sides upon sides of yellow smoke-dried bacon, hams, and hung beef in abundance. The kitchen tables were large, and white as milk; and the dresser rich in its shining array of delf and pewter. Everything, in fact, was upon a large scale. Huge meal chests were ranged on one side, and two or three settle beds on the other, conspicuous, as I have said, for their uncommon cleanliness; whilst hung from the ceiling were the *glaiks*, a machine for churning; and beside the dresser stood an immense churn, certainly too unwieldy to be managed except by machinery. The farmer was a ruddy-faced Milesian, who wore a drab frieze coat,

[1] Owns. [2] The pretty girl milking her cow.

with a velvet collar, buff waistcoat, corduroy small-clothes, and top-boots well greased from the tops down.[1] He was not only an agriculturist, but a grazier, remarkable for shrewdness and good sense, generally attended fairs and markets, and brought three or four large droves of fat cattle to England every year. From his fob hung the brass chain and almost rusty key of a watch, which he kept certainly more for use than ornament.

"A little sup o' this," said he, "won't take your life," approaching Jemmy with a bottle of as good poteen as ever escaped the eye of an exciseman; "it'll refresh you—for you're tired, or I wouldn't offer it, rason that one bint on what you're bint on oughtn't to be makin' freedoms wid the same dhrink. But there's a time for everything, an' there's a time for this. Thank you, agra," he added, in reply to Jemmy, who had drunk his health. "Now, don't be frettin—but make yourself as aisy as if you were at your own father's hearth. You'll have everything to your heart's contint for this night; the carts are goin' into the market to-morrow arly—you can sit upon them, an' maybe you'll get somethin' more nor you expect: sure the Lord has given it to me, an' why wouldn't I share it wid them that wants it more nor I do?"

The lad's heart yearned to the generous farmer, for he felt that his kindness had the stamp of truth and sincerity upon it. He could only raise his eyes in a silent prayer that none belonging to him might ever be compelled, as strangers and wayfarers, to commit themselves, as he did, to the causualties of life, in pursuit of those attainments which poverty cannot otherwise command. Fervent, indeed, was his prayer; and certain we are that, because it was sincere, it must have been heard.

In the meantime, the good woman, or *vanithee*, had got the pot of water warmed, in which Jemmy was made to put his feet. She then stripped up her arms to the elbows, and, with soap and seedy meal, affectionately bathed his legs and feet: then taking the praskeen, or coarse towel, she wiped them with a kindness which thrilled to his heart.

"And now," said she, "I must give you a cure for blisthers, an' it's this:—In the mornin', if we're all spared, as we will, plase the Almighty, I'll give you a needle an' some white woollen thread, well soaped. When your blisthers gets up, dhraw the soapy thread through them, clip it on each side, an', my life for yours, they won't trouble you. Sure I thried it the year I went on my station to Lough Derg, an' I know it to be the rale cure."

"Here, Nelly," said the farmer—who sat with a placid, benevolent face, smoking his pipe on the opposite hob—to one of the maids who came in from milking—"bring up a noggin of that milk, we want it here: let it be none of your washy *foremilk*, but the *strippins*, Nelly, that has the strinth in it. Up wid it here, a colleen."

"The never a one o' the man but's doatin' downright, so he is,"

[1] This, almost in every instance, is the dress of a wealthy Irish farmer.

observed the wife, "to go to fill the tired child's stomach wid plash. Can't you wait till he ates a thrifle o' somethin' stout, to keep life in him, after his hard journey? Does your feet feel themselves cool an' asy now, a hagur?"

"Indeed," said Jemmy, "I'm almost as fresh as when I set out. 'Twas little thought I had, when I came away this mornin', that I'd meet wid so much friendship on my journey. I hope it's a sign that God's on my side in my undertakin'!"

"I hope so, avourneen—I hope so, an' it is, too,' replied the farmer, taking the pipe out of his mouth, and mildly whiffing away the smoke, "an' God 'ill be always on your side, as long as your intentions are good. Now ate somethin'—you must want it by this; an' thin, when you rest yourself bravely, take a tass into a good feather-bed, where you can sleep rings round you.[1] Who knows but you'll be able to say mass for me or some o' my family yit. God grant that, anyway, avick!"

Poor James's heart was too full to eat much; he took, therefore, only a very slender portion of the refreshments set before him; but his hospitable entertainers had no notion of permitting him to use the free exercise of his discretion on this important point. When James put away the knife and fork, as an indication of his having concluded the meal, the farmer and his wife turned about, both at the same moment, with a kind of astonishment.

"Eh? is it givin' over that way you are? Why, alanna, it's nothin' at all you've tuck; sure little Brian there would make a fool of you, so he would, at the atin'. Come, come, a bouchal—don't be ashamed, or make any way sthrange at all, but ate hearty."

"I declare I *have* ate heartily, thank you," replied James: "oceans itself, so I did. I couldn't swally a bit more if the house was full."

"Arrah, Brian," said the wife, "cut him up more o' that hung beef; it's ashamed the crathur is! Take it, avick; don't we know the journey you had? Faix, if one o' the boys was out on a day's thravellin', you'd see how he'd handle himself."

"Indeed," said James, "I can't—if I could I would. Sure I would be no way backward at all, so I wouldn't."

"Throth, an' you can an' must," said the farmer: "the never a rise you'll rise till you finish that"—putting over a complement out of all reasonable proportion with his age and size.

"There now's a small taste, an' you must finish it. To go to ate nothin' at all. Hut tut! by the tops o' my boots, you must put that clear an' clane out o' sight, or I'll go mad and burn them."

The lad recommenced, and continued to eat as long as he could possibly hold out; at length he ceased.

"I can't go on," said he; "don't ax me—I can't, indeed."

"Bad manners to the word I'll hear till you finish it: you know it's but a thrifle to spake of. Thry agin, avick, but take your time; you'll be able for it."

[1] As much as you please.

The poor lad's heart was engaged on other thoughts and other scenes—his home, and its beloved inmates; sorrow, and the gush of young affections, were ready to burst forth.

"I cannot ate," said he, and he looked imploringly on the farmer and his wife, whilst the tears started to his eyes—"don't ax me, for my heart's wid them I left behind me, that I may never see agin;" and he wept in a burst of grief which he could not restrain.

Neither the strength nor tenderness of the lad's affection was unappreciated by this excellent couple. In a moment the farmer's wife was also in tears; nor did her husband break the silence for some minutes.

"The Almighty pity an' strengthen him!" said the wife, "but he has the good an' the kind heart, an' would be a credit to any family. Whisht, acushla machree—whisht, we won't ax you to ate—no, indeed. It was out o' kindness we did it: don't be cast down aither; sure it isn't the ocean you're crossin', but goin' from one county like to another. God'll guard an' take care o' you, so he will. Your intintion's good, an' he'll prosper it."

"He will, avick," said the farmer himself—"he will. Cheer up, my good boy! I know thim that's larned an' creditable clargy this day, that went as you're goin'—ay, an' that ris an' helped their paarents, an' put them above poverty an' distress; an' never fear, wid a blessing, but you'll do the same."

"That's what brings me at all," replied the boy, drying his tears; 'if I was once able to take them out o' their distresses I'd be happy—only I'm afeard the cares o' the world will break my father's heart before I have it in my power to assist him."

"No such thing, darlin'," said the good woman. "Sure his hopes out o' you, an' his love for you will keep him up; an' you dunna but God may give him a blessin' too, avick."

"Mix another sup o' that for him," said the farmer—"he's low spirited, an' it's too strong to give him any more of it as it is. Childhre, where's the masther from us—eh? Why, thin, God help them, the crathurs—wasn't it *thoughtful*[1] o' them to lave the place while he was at his dinner, for fraid he'd be dashed—manin' them young crathurs, Alley. But can you tell us where the masther is? Isn't this his night wid us? I know he tuck his dinner here."

"Ay did he; but it's up to Larry Murphy's he's gone, to thry his son in his book-keepin'. Mavrone, but he had time enough to put him well through it afore this, anyway."

As she spoke, a short, thick-set man, with black twinkling eyes and ruddy cheeks, entered. This personage was no other than the schoolmaster of that district, who circulated, like a newspaper, from one farmer's house to another, in order to expound for his kind entertainers the news of the day, his own learning, and the very evident extent of their ignorance.

The moment he came in the farmer and his wife rose with an air of

[1] Considerate.

much deference, and placed a chair for him exactly opposite the fire, leaving a respectful distance on each side, within which no illiterate mortal durst presume to sit.

"Misther Corcoran," said the farmer, presenting Jemmy's satchel, through which the shapes of the books were quite plain, "*thig in thu shinn?*"[1] and as he spoke he looked significantly at its owner.

"Ah!" replied the man of letters, "*thigum, thigum.* God be wid the day when I carried the likes of it. 'Tis a badge of polite genius, that no boy need be ashamed of. So, my young suckling of litherature, you're bound for Munster?—for that counthry where the swallows fly in conic sections—where the magpies and the turkeys confab in Latin, and the cows and bullocks will roar you Doric Greek—bo-a-o—clamo. What's your pathronymic?—*quo nomine gowdes, Domine doctissime?*"

The lad was silent; but the farmer's wife turned up the whites of her eyes with an expression of wonder and surprise at the erudition of the "masther."

"I persave you are as yet uninitiated into the elementary *principia* of the languages; well—the honour is still before you. What's your name?"

"James M'Evoy, sir."

Just now the farmer's family began to assemble round the spacious hearth; the young lads, whose instruction the worthy teacher claimed as his own peculiar task, came timidly forward, together with two or three pretty bashful girls, with sweet flashing eyes, and countenances full of feeling and intelligence. Behind, on the settles, half a dozen servants of both sexes sat in pairs—each boy placing himself beside his favourite girl. These *appeared* to be as strongly interested in the learned conversation which the master held as if they were masters and mistresses of Munster Latin and Doric Greek themselves; but an occasional thump cautiously bestowed by no slender female hand upon the sturdy shoulder of her companion, or a dry cough from one of the young men, fabricated to drown the coming blow, gave slight indications that they contrived to have a little amusement among themselves, altogether independent of Mr. Corcoran's erudition.

When the latter came in, Jemmy was taking the tumbler of punch which the farmer's wife had mixed for him; on this he fixed an expressive glance, which instantly reverted to the *vanithee*, and from her to the large bottle which stood in a window to the right of the fire. It is a quick eye, however, that can anticipate Irish hospitality.

"Alley," said the farmer, ere the wife had time to comply with the hint conveyed by the black, twinkling eye of the schoolmaster—"why, Alley ——"

"Sure, I am," she replied, "an' will have it for you in less than no time."

She accordingly addressed herself to the bottle, and in a few minutes handed a reeking jug of punch to the *Farithee*, or good man.

[1] You understand this?

"Come, masther, by the hand o' my body, I don't like dhry talk so long as I can get anything to moisten the discoorse. Here's your health, masther," continued the farmer, winking at the rest, "and a speedy conclusion to what you know! In throth, she's the pick of a good girl—not to mintion what she has for her portion. I'm a frind to the same family, and will put a spoke in your wheel, masther, that'll sarve you."

"Oh, Mr. Lanigan, very well, sir—very well—you're becoming quite facetious upon me," said the little man, rather confused; "but upon my credit and reputation, except the amorous inclination in regard to me is on *her* side"—and he looked sheepishly at his hands—"I can't say that the arrows of Cupid have as yet pinethrated the sintimintal side of my heart. It is not wid me as it was wid Dido—hem—

'Non hæret lateri lethalis arundo,'

as Virgil says. Yet I can't say, but if a friend were to become spokesman for me, and insinuate in my behalf a small taste of amorous sintimintality, why—hem, hem, hem! The company's health! Lad James M'Evoy, *your* health, and success to you, my good boy!—hem, hem!"

"Here's wishin' him the same!" said the farmer.

"James," said the schoolmaster, "you are goin' to Munsther, an' I can say that I have travelled it from end to end, not to a bad purpose, I hope—hem! Well, a bouchal, there are hard days and nights before you, so keep a firm heart. If you have money, as 'tis likely you have, don't let a single rap of it into the hands of the schoolmaster, although the first thing he'll do will be to bring you home to his own house, and palaver you night an' day, till he succeeds in persuading you to leave it in his hands for security. You might, if not duly preadmonished, surrender it to his solicitations, for

'Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit.'

Michael, what case is *mortalium*?" added he, suddenly addressing one of the farmer's sons. "Come now, Michael, where's your brightness? What case is *mortalium*?"

The boy was taken by surprise, and for a few minutes could not reply.

"Come, man," said the father, "be sharp, spake out bravely, an' don't be afeard: nor don't be in a hurry aither; we'll wait for you."

"Let him alone—let him alone," said Corcoran; "I'll face the same boy agin the country for *cuteness*. If he dosen't expound that, I'll never consthre a line of Latin, or Greek, or Masoretic, while I'm livin'."

His cunning master knew right well that the boy, who was only confused at the suddenness of the question, would feel no difficulty in answering it to his satisfaction. Indeed, it was impossible for him to miss it, as he was then reading the seventh book of Virgil, and the fourth of Homer. It is, however, a trick with such masters to put simple questions of that nature to their pupils, when at the houses of their parents, as knotty and difficult, and, when they are answered, to

assume an air of astonishment at the profound reach of thought displayed by the pupil.

When Michael recovered himself he instantly replied, "*Mortalium* is the ginitive case of *nemo*, by '*Nomina Partitiva*.'"

Corcoran laid down the tumbler, which he was in the act of raising to his lips, and looked at the lad with an air of surprise and delight, then at the farmer and his wife, alternately, and shook his head with much mystery. "Michael," said he to the lad, "will you go out, and tell us what the night's doin'."

The boy accordingly went out. "Why," said Corcoran, in his absence, "if ever there was a phanix, and that boy will be the bird—an Irish phanix he will be; a

'Rara avis in terris, nigroque simillima cygno!'

There's no batin' him at anything he undhertakes. Why, there's thim that are makin' good bread by their larnin', that couldn't resolve that; and you all saw how he did it widout the book! Why, if he goes on at this rate, I'm afraid he'll soon be too many for myself!—hem!"

"Too many for yourself! Fill the masther's tumbler, Alley. Too many for yourself! No, no! I doubt he'll never see that day, bright as he is, an' cute. That's it—put a hape upon it. Give me your hand, masther. I thank you for your attintion to him; an' the boy *is* a credit to us. Come over, Michael, avourneen. Here, take what's in this tumbler, an' finish it. Be a good boy, an' mind your lessons, an' do everything the masther here—the Lord bless him!—bids you, an' you'll never want a frind, masther, nor a dinner, nor a bed, nor a guinea, while the Lord spares me aither the one or the other."

"I know it, Mr. Lanigan, I know it; and I will make that boy the pride o' Ireland, if I'm spared. I'll show him *cramboes* that would puzzle the great Scaliger himself; and many other difficulties I'll let him into that I have never let out yet, except to Tim Kearney, that bate them all at Thrinity College up in Dublin, last June."

"Arrah, how was that, masther?"

"Tim, you see, went in to his entrance examinayshuns, and one of the Fellows came to examine him, but a divil a long time it was till Tim sacked him.

"'Go back agin,' says Tim, 'and sind someone that's *able* to tache me, for you're *not*.'

"So another greater scholar agin came to thry Tim, and *did* thry him, and Tim made a hare of *him*, before all that was in the place—five or six thousand ladies and gintlemen, at laste!

"The great larned Fellows thin began to look odd enough; so they picked out the best scholar among them but one, and slipped him at Tim: but well becomes Tim, the never a long it was till he had *him*, too, as dumb as a post. The Fellow went back.

"'Gintlemen,' says he to the rest, 'we'll be disgraced all out,' says he, 'for except the Prowost sacks that Munsther spalpeen, he'll bate us all, an' we'll never be able to hould up our heads afther.'

"Accordingly, the Prowost attacks Tim; and such a meetin' as they had never was seen in Thrinity College since its establishment. At last, when they had been nine hours and a half at it, the Prowost put one word to him that Tim couldn't expound, so he lost it by *one* word only. For the last two hours the Prowost carried on the examinayshun in Hebrew, thinking, you see, that he *had* Tim there; but he was mistaken, for Tim answered him in good Munsther Irish, and it so happened that they understood each other, for the two languages are first cousins, or, at all evints, close blood relations. Tim was then pronounced to be the best scholar in Ireland except the Prowost; though, among ourselves, they might have thought of the man that *taught* him. That, however, wasn't all. A young lady fell in love wid Tim, and is to make him a present of herself and her great fortune (three estates) the moment he becomes a counsellor: and in the meantime she allows him thirty pounds a year to bear his expenses and live like a gintleman.

"Now to return to the youth in the corner: *Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit.* Jemmy, keep your money, or give it to the priest to keep, and it will be safest; but by no means let the Hyblean honey of the schoolmaster's blarney deprive you of it, otherwise it will be a *vale, vale, longum vale* between you. *Crede experto!*"

"Masther," said the farmer, "many a strange accident you met wid on yer thravels through Munsther?"

"No doubt of that, Mr. Lanigan. I and another boy thravelled it in society together. One day we were walking towards a gintleman's house on the roadside, and it happened that we met the owner of it in the vicinity, although we didn't know him to be such.

"'*Salvete Domini!*' said he, in good fresh Latin.

"'*Tu sis salvus, quoque?*' said I to him, for my comrade wasn't cute, an' I was always orathor.

"'*Unde venitis?*' said he, comin' over us wid another deep piece of larnin', the construction of which was 'Where do yees come from?'

"I replied, '*Per varios casus et tot discrimina rerum, venimus a Mayo.*'

"'Good!' said he, 'you're bright; follow me.'

"So he brought us over to his own house, and ordered us bread and cheese and a posset; for it was Friday, an' we couldn't touch mate. He, in the manetime, sat an' chatted along wid us. The thievin' cook, however, in making the posset, kept the curds to herself, except a slight taste, here and there, that floated on the top; but she was liberal enough of the whey, anyhow.

"Now I had been well trained to fishing in my more youthful days; and no gorsoon could grope a trout wid me. I accordingly sent the spoon through the pond before me wid the skill of a connoisseur; but to no purpose—it came up wid nothin' but the whey.

"So said I off-hand to the gintleman, houlding up the bowl, and looking at it with a disappointed face:

Apparent *rari* nantes in gurgite vasto.

This,' says I, 'plase your hospitality, may be Pactolus, but the devil a taste o' the proper sand is in the bottom of it.'

"The wit of this, you see, pleased him, and we got an excellent treat in his *studium*, or study; for he was determined to give myself another trial.

"'What's the wickedest line in Virgil?' said he.

"Now I had Virgil at my finger ends, so I answered him:

'*Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo.*

"'Very good,' said he, 'you have the genius, and will come to somethin' yet: now tell me the most moral line in Virgil.'

"I answered:

'*Discere justitiam moniti, et non temnere divos.*'[1]

"'Depend upon it,' said he, 'you will be a luminary. The morning star will be but a farthing candle to you; and if you take in the learning as you do the cheese, in a short time there won't be a man in Munsther fit to teach you,' and he laughed, for you see he had a tendency to jocosity.

"He did not give me up here, however, being determined to go deeper wid me.

"'Can you translate a newspaper into Latin prose?' said he.

"Now the divil a one o' me was just then sure about the prose, so I was goin' to tell him; but before I had time to speak, he thrust the paper into my hand, and desired me to thranslate half a dozen barbarous advertisements.

"The first that met me was about a reward offered for a Newfoundland dog and a terrier, that had been stolen from a fishing-tackle manufacturer, and then came a list of his shabby merchandise, ending with a long-winded encomium upon his gunpowder, shot, and double-barrelled guns. Now may I be shot wid a blank cartridge if I ever felt so much at an amplush in my life, and I said so.

"'Your honour has hooked me wid the fishing-hook,' said I; 'but I grant the cheese was good bait, anyhow.'

"So he laughed heartily, and bid me go on.

"Well, I thought the first was difficult; but the second was Masoretic to it—something about drawbacks, excisemen, and a long custom-house list, that would puzzle Publius Virgilius Maro, if he was set to translate it. However, I went through wid it as well as I could; where I couldn't find Latin, I laid in the Greek, and where the Greek failed me, I gave the Irish, which, to tell the truth, in consequence of its vernacularity, I found to be the most convanient. Och, och, many a larned scrimmage I have signalised myself in during my time. Sure my name's as common as a mail-coach in Thrinity College; and 'tis well known there isn't a Fellow in it but I could sack, except, maybe, the Prowost. That's their own opinion. 'Corcoran," says the Prowost, 'is the most larned man in Ireland; an' I'm not ashamed,' says he,

[1] He is evidently drawing the long bow here; this anecdote has been told before.

'to acknowledge that I'd rather decline meeting him upon deep points.' Ginteels, all your healths—hem! But among ourselves I could bog him in a very short time; though I'd scorn to deprive the gintleman of his reputation or his place, even if he sent me a challenge of larnin' to-morrow, although he's too cute to venture on doing *that*—hem, hem!"

To hear an obscure creature, whose name was but faintly known in the remote parts even of the parish in which he lived, draw the long bow at such a rate was highly amusing. The credulous character of his auditory, however, was no slight temptation to him; for he knew that next to the legends of their saints, or the Gospel itself, his fictions ranked in authenticity; and he was determined that it should not be his fault if their opinion of his learning and talents was not raised to the highest point.

The feeling experienced by the poor scholar when he awoke the next morning was one both of satisfaction and sorrow. He thought once more of his home and kindred, and reflected that it might be possible he had seen the last of his beloved relations. His grief, however, was checked when he remembered the warm and paternal affection with which he was received on the preceding night by his hospitable countryman. He offered up his prayers to God; humbly besought his grace and protection; nor did he forget to implore a blessing upon those who had thus soothed his early sorrows, and afforded him, though a stranger and friendless, shelter, comfort, and sympathy.

"I hope," thought he, "that I will meet many such, till I overcome my difficulties, an' find myself able to assist my poor father an' mother!"

And he did meet many such among the humble, and despised, and neglected of his countrymen; for—and we say it with pride—the character of this excellent farmer is thoroughly that of our peasantry within the range of domestic life.

When he had eaten a comfortable breakfast, and seen his satchel stuffed with provision for his journey, the farmer brought him up to his own room, in which were also his wife and children.

"God," said he, "has been good to me, blessed be his holy name!—betther, it appears, in one sinse, than he has been to you, dear—though, maybe, I don't desarve it as well. But no matther, acushla; *I* have it, an' *you* want it; so here's a thrifle to help you forrid in your larnin'; an' all I ax from you is to offer up a bit of prayer for me of an odd time, an' if ever you live to be a priest, to say, if it wouldn't be troublesome, one mass for me an' those that you see about me. It's not much, James agra—only two guineas. They may stand your friend, whin friends will be scarce wid you; though I hope that won't be the case aither."

The tears were already streaming down Jemmy's cheeks. "Oh," said the artless boy, "God for ever reward you! but sure I have a great dale of money in the—in the—cuff o' my coat. Indeed, I have, an' I won't want it!"

The farmer, affected by the utter simplicity of the lad, looked at his wife and smiled, although a tear stood in his eye at the time. She wiped her eyes with her apron, and backed the kind offer of her husband.

"Take it, asthore," she added. "In your cuff! Musha, God help you! sure it's not much you or the likes of you can have in your cuff, avourneen! Don't be ashamed, but take it; we can well afford it, glory be to God for it! It's not, agra, bekase you're goin' the way you are—though that same's an honour to you—but bekase our hearts warmed to you, that we offered it, an' bekase we would wish you to be thinkin' of us now an' thin, when you're in a strange part of the country. Let me open your pocket an' put them into it. That's a good boy, thank you, an' God bless an' prosper you! I'm sure you wor always biddable."

"Now, childher," said the farmer, addressing his sons and daughters, "never see the sthranger widout a frind, nor wantin' a bed or a dinner, when you grow up to be men an' women. There's many a turn in this world; we may be sthrangers ourselves; an' think of what I would feel if any of you was far from me, widout money or friends, when I'd hear that you met a father in a strange counthry, that lightened your hearts by his kindness. Now, dear, the carts 'ill be ready in no time —eh? Why there they are at the gate waitin' for you. Get into one of them, an' they'll lave you in the next town. Come, man, bud-an', age, be stout-hearted, an' don't cry—sure we did nothin' for you to spake of."

He shook the poor scholar by the hand, and drawing his hat over his eyes, passed hurriedly out of the room. Alley stooped down, kissed his lips, and wept; and the children each embraced him with that mingled feeling of compassion and respect which is uniformly entertained for the poor scholar in Ireland.

The boy felt as if he had been again separated from his parents; with a sobbing bosom and wet cheeks he bid them farewell, and, mounting one of the carts, was soon beyond sight and hearing of the kind-hearted farmer and his family.

When the cart had proceeded about a mile, it stopped, and one of the men who accompanied it, addressing a boy who passed with two sods of turf under his arm, desired him to hurry on and inform his master that they waited for him.

"Tell Misther Corcoran to come into coort," said the man, laughing, "my lordship's waitin' to hear his defince for intindin' *not* to run away wid Miss Judy Malowny. Tell him Lord *Carty's* ready to pass sintince on him for not stalin' the heart of her wid his Rule o' Three. Ha! by the holy farmer, you'll get it for stayin' from school to this hour. Be quick, a bouchal!"

In a few minutes the trembling urchin, glad of any message that might serve to divert the dreaded birch from himself, entered the uproarious "Siminary," caught his forelock, bobbed down his head to the master, and pitched his two sods into a little heap of turf which 'ay in the corner of the school.

"Arrah, Pat Roach, is this an hour to inter into my establishment wid impunity? Eh, you Rosicrucian?"

"Masther, sir," replied the adroit monkey, "I've a message for you, sir, i' you plase."

"An' what might the message be, Masther Pat Roach? To dine to-day wid your worthy father, a bouchal?"

"No, sir; it's from one o' Mr. Lanigan's boys—him that belongs to the carts, sir; he wants to spake to you, sir, i' you plase."

"An' do you give that by way of an apologetical oration for your absence from the advantages of my tuition until this hour? However, *non constat, Patrici;* I'll pluck the crow wid you on my return. If you don't find yourself a well-flogged youth for your 'mitchin,' never say that this right hand can administer condign punishment to that part of your physical theory which constitutes the antithesis to your *vacuum caput. En et ecce,* you villain," he added, pointing to the birch, "it's newly cut and trimmed, and pregnant wid alacrity for the operation. I correct, Patricius, on fundamental principles, which you'll soon *feel* to your cost."

"Masther, sir," replied the lad, in a friendly, conciliating tone, "my fadher ud be oblaged to you if you'd take share of a fat goose wid him to-morrow."

"Go to your sate, Paddy, avourneen; devil a dacent boy in the siminary I joke so much wid as I do wid yourself; an' all out of respect for your worthy parents. Faith, I've a great regard for them, all out, an' tell them so."

He then proceeded to the carts, and approaching Jemmy, gave him such advice touching his conduct in Munster as he considered to be most serviceable to an inexperienced lad of his years.

"Here," said the kind-hearted soul—"here, James, is my mite; it's but bare ten shillings; but if I could make it a pound for you, it would give me a degree of delectability which I have not enjoyed for a long time. The truth is there's something like the *nodus matrimonii*, or what they facetiously term the priest's gallows, dangling over my head, so that any little thrifle I may get must be kept together for that crisis, James, a bouchal; so that must be my apology for not giving you more, joined to the naked fact that I never was remarkable for a superfluity of cash under any circumstances. Remember what I told you last night. Don't let a shilling of your money into the hands of the masther you settle wid. Give it to the parish priest, and dhraw it from him when you want it. Don't join the parties or the factions of the school. Above all, spake ill of nobody; and if the masther is harsh upon you, either bear it patiently, or mintion it to the priest, or to some other person of respectability in the parish, and you'll be protected. You'll be apt to meet cruelty enough, my good boy; for there are larned Neros in Munster, who'd flog if the province was in flames.

"Now, James, I'll tell you what you'll do, when you reach the larned south. Plant yourself on the highest hill in the neighbourhood wherein the academician with whom you intend to stop lives. Let the hour of reconnoitring be that in which dinner is preparing. When

seated there, James, take a survey of the smoke that ascends from the chimneys of the farmers' houses, and be sure to direct your steps to that from which the highest and merriest column issues. This is the old plan, and it is a sure one. The highest smoke rises from the largest fire, the largest fire boils the biggest pot, the biggest pot generally holds the fattest bacon, and the fattest bacon is kept by the richest farmer. Its a wholesome and comfortable *climax*, my boy, and one by which I myself was enabled to keep a dacent portion of educated flesh between the master's birch and my ribs. The science itself is called Gastric Geography, and is peculiar only to itinerant young gintlemen who seek for knowledge in the classical province of Munster.

"Here's a book that thravelled along wid myself through all peregrinations—Creech's Translation of Horace. Keep it for my sake; and when you accomplish your education, if you return home this way, I'd thank you to give me a call. Farewell! God bless you and prosper you as I wish, and as I am sure you desarve."

He shook the lad by the hand; and as it was probable that his own former struggles with poverty, when in the pursuit of education, came with all the power of awakened recollection to his mind, he hastily drew his hand across his eyes, and returned to resume the brief but harmless authority of the ferula.

After arriving at the next town, Jemmy found himself once more prosecuting his journey alone. In proportion as he advanced into a strange land, his spirits became depressed, and his heart cleaved more and more to those whom he had left behind him. There is, however, an enthusiasm in the visions of youth, in the speculations of a young heart, which frequently overcomes difficulties that a mind taught by the experience of life would often shrink from encountering. We may all remember the utter recklessness of danger with which, in our youthful days, we crossed floods, or stood upon the brow of yawning precipices—feats which, in after years, the wealth of kingdoms could not induce us to perform. Experience, as well as conscience, makes cowards of us all.

The poor scholar in the course of his journey had the satisfaction of finding himself an object of kind and hospitable attention to his countrymen. His satchel of books was literally a passport to their hearts. For instance, as he wended his solitary way, depressed and travel-worn, he was frequently accosted by labourers from behind a ditch on the road-side, and, after giving a brief history of the object he had in view, brought, if it was dinner-hour, to some farmhouse or cabin, where he was made to partake of their meal. Even those poor creatures who gain a scanty subsistence by keeping what are called "dhry lodgins," like *lucus a non lucendo*, because they never keep out the rain, and have mostly a bottle of whisky for those who know *how* to call for it—even they, in most instances, not only refused to charge the poor scholar for his bed, but declined receiving any remuneration for his subsistence.

"Och, och, no, you poor young crathur, not from *you*. No, no; if

we wouldn't help the likes o' you, who ought we to help? No, dear; but instead o' the *airighad*,[1] jist lave us your blessin', an' maybe we'll thrive as well wid that as we would wid your little pences, that you'll be wantin' for yourself, whin your frinds won't be near to help you."

Many, in fact, were the little marks of kindness and attention which the poor lad received on his way. Sometimes a ragged peasant, if he happened to be his fellow-traveller, would carry his satchel so long as they travelled together; or a carman would give him a lift on his empty car; or some humorous postilion, or tipsy "shay-boy," with a comical leer in his eye, would shove him into his vehicle, remarking:

"Bedad, let nobody say you're a poor scholar *now*, an' you goin' to school in a coach! Be the piper that played afore Moses, if ever any rascal upbraids you wid it, tell him, says you—'You damned rap,' says you, 'I wint to school in a coach! an' that,' says you, 'was what none o' yer beggerly gineration was ever able to do,' says you; 'an' moreover, be the same token,' says you, 'be the holy farmer, if you bring it up to me, I'll make a third eye in your forehead wid the butt o' this whip,' says you. Whish! darlins! That's the go! There's drivin', Barny! eh?"

At length, after much toil and travel, he reached the South, having experienced as he proceeded a series of affectionate attentions, which had, at least, the effect of reconciling him to the measure he had taken, and impressing upon his heart a deeper confidence in the kindness and hospitality of his countrymen.

Upon the evening of the day on which he terminated his journey, twilight was nearly falling; the town in which he intended to stop for the night was not a quarter of a mile before him, yet he was scarcely able to reach it; his short, yielding steps were evidently those of a young and fatigued traveller; his brow was moist with perspiration; he had just begun, too, to consider in what manner he should introduce himself to the master who taught the school at which he had been advised to stop, when he heard a step behind him, and on looking back he discovered a tall, well-made, ruddy-faced young man, dressed in black, with a book in his hand, walking after him.

"*Unde et quo, viator?*" said the stranger, on coming up with him.

"Oh, sir," replied Jemmy, "I have no Latin *yet*."

"You are on your way to seek it, however," replied the other. "Have you travelled far?"

"A long way, indeed, sir; I came from the county ——, sir—the upper part of it."

"Have you letters from your parish priest?"

"I have, sir, and one from my father's landlord, Square Benson, if you ever heard of him."

"What's your object in learning Latin?"

"To be a priest, sir, wid the help o' God; an' to rise my poor father an' mother out of their poverty."

[1] Money.

His companion, after hearing this reply, bent a glance upon him that indicated the awakening of an interest in the lad much greater than he probably otherwise would have felt.

"It's only of late," continued the boy, "that my father and mother got poor; they were once very well to do in the world, But they were put out o' their farm in ordher that the agint might put a man that had married a *get*[1] of his own into it. My father intended to lay his case before Colonel B——, the landlord; but he couldn't see him at all, bekase he never comes near the estate. The agint's called Yallow Sam, sir; he's rich through cheatery and dishonesty; puts money out at intherest, then goes to law, and brakes the people entirely; for, somehow, he never was known to lose a lawsuit at all, sir. They say it's the divil, sir, that keeps the lawyers on his side; and that when he an' the lawyers do be dhrawin' up their writins, the divil—God betune me an' harm!—does be helpin' them."

"And is Colonel B—— actually—or, rather, was he—your father's landlord?"

"He was, indeed, sir; it's thruth I'm tellin' you."

"Singular enough! Stand beside me here—do you see that large house to the right among the trees?"

"I do, sir; a great big house, entirely; like a castle, sir."

"The same. Well, that house belongs to Colonel B——, and I am very intimate with him. I am Catholic curate of this parish; and I was, before my ordination, private tutor in his family for four years."

"Maybe, sir, you might have intherest to get my father back into his farm?"

"I do not know that, my good lad, for I am told Colonel B—— is rather embarrassed, and, if I mistake not, in the power of the man you call Yellow Sam, who has, I believe, heavy mortgages upon his property. But no matter; if I cannot help your father, I shall be able to serve yourself. Where do you intend to stop for the night?"

"In dhry lodgin', sir; that's where my father and mother bid me stop always. They war very kind to me, sir, in the dhry lodgins."

"Who is there in Ireland who would not be kind *to you*, my good boy? I trust you do not neglect your religious duties?"

"Wid the help o' God, sir, I strive to attind to them as well as I can; particularly since I left my father and mother. Every night an' mornin', sir, I say five pathers, five aves, an' a creed; an' sometimes, when I'm walkin' the road, I slip up an odd pather, sir, an' ave, that God may grant me good luck."

The priest smiled at his candour and artlessness, and could not help feeling the interest which the boy had already excited in him increase.

"You do right," said he, "and take care that you neglect not the worship of God. Avoid bad company; be not quarrelsome at school; study to improve yourself diligently; attend mass regularly, and be punctual in going to confession.

[1] A term implying illegitimacy.

After some further conversation, the priest and he entered the town together.

"This is my house," said the former; "or, if not altogether mine, at least, that in which I lodge; let me see you here at two o'clock to-morrow. In the meantime follow me, and I shall place you with a family where you will experience every kindness and attention that can make you comfortable."

He then led him a few doors up the street, till he stopped at a decent-looking "house of entertainment," to the proprietors of which he introduced him.

"Be kind to this strange boy," said the worthy clergyman, "and whatever the charges of his board and lodging may be until we get him settled, I shall be accountable for them."

"God forbid, your reverence, that ever a penny belongin' to a poor boy looking for his larnin' should go into our pockets, if he was wid us twelve months in the year. No—no! he can stay with the bouchaleens;[1] let them be thryin' one another in their books. If he is fardher on in the Latin than Andy, he can help Andy; an' if Andy has the foreway of him, why Andy can help him. Come here, boys, all of yees. Here's a comarade for yees—a dacent boy that's lookin' for his larnin'; the Lord enable him! Now be kind to him, an' whisper," he added, in an undertone, "don't be bringin' a blush to the gorsoon's face. Do yees hear? Ma chorp! if yees do! Now mind it. Yees know what I can do whin I'm well vexed! Go, now, an' git him somethin' to ate an' dhrink, an' let him sleep wid Barney in the feather-bed."

During the course of the next day the benevolent curate introduced him to the parish priest, who, from the frequent claims urged by poor scholars upon his patronage, felt no particular interest in his case. He wrote a short letter, however, to the master with whom Jemmy intended to become a pupil, stating that "he was an honest boy, the son of *legitimate parents*, and worthy of consideration."

The curate, who saw further into the boy's character than the parish priest, accompanied him on the following day to the school; introduced him to the master in the most favourable manner, and recommended him in general to the hospitable care of all the pupils. This introduction did not serve the boy so much as might have been expected; there was nothing particular in the letter of the *parish* priest, and the curate was *but* a curate—no formidable personage in *any* church, where the good-will of the rector has not been already secured.

Jemmy returned that day to his lodgings, and the next morning, with his Latin grammar under his arm, he went to the school to taste the first bitter fruits of the tree of knowledge.

On entering it, which he did with a beating heart, he found the despot of a hundred subjects sitting behind a desk, with his hat on, a brow superciliously severe, and his nose crimped into a most cutting

[1] Little boys.

and vinegar curl. The truth was, the master knew the character of the curate, and felt that, because he had taken Jemmy under his protection, no opportunity remained for him of fleecing the boy, under the pretence of securing his money, and that consequently the arrival of the poor scholar would be no windfall, as he had expected.

When Jemmy entered, he looked first at the master for his welcome; but the master, who verified the proverb that there are none so blind as those who will not see, took no notice whatsoever of him. The boy then looked timidly about the school in quest of a friendly face, and, indeed, few faces except friendly ones were turned upon him.

Several of the scholars rose up simultaneously to speak to him; but the pedagogue angrily inquired why they had left their seats and their business.

"Why, sir," said a young Munsterman, with a fine Milesian face—"be Gorra, sir, I believe if *we* don't welcome the poor scholar, I think *you* won't. This is the boy, sir, that Mr. O'Brien came along wid yistherday, an spoke so well of."

"I know that, Thady; and Misther O'Brien thinks, because he himself first passed through that overgrown hedge-school, wid slates upon the roof of it, called Thrinity College, and matriculated in Maynooth afther, that he has legal authority to recommend every young vagrant to the gratuitous benefits of legitimate classicality. An', I suppose, that you are acting the pathrun, too, Thady, and intend to take this young wild-goose under your protection?"

"Why, sir, isn't he a poor scholar? Sure he mustn't want his bit an' sup, nor his night's lodgin', anyhow. You're to give him his larnin' only, sir."

"I suppose so, Mr. Thaddeus; but this is the penalty of celebrity. If I weren't so celebrated a man for classics as I am, I would have none of this work. I tell you, Thady, if I had fifty sons I wouldn't make one o' them *celebrated*."

"Wait till you have one first, sir, and you may make him as great a numskull as you plase, masther."

"But in the meantime, Thady, I'll have no dictation from you as to whether I'll have one or fifty; or as to whether he'll be an ass or a Newton. I say that a dearth of larnin' is like a year of famine in Ireland. When the people are hard pushed, they bleed the fattest bullocks, an' live on their blood; an' so it is wid us academicians. It's always he that has the most larned blood in his veins, and the greatest quantity of it, that such hungry leeches fasten on."

"Thrue for you, sir," said the youth, with a smile; "but they say the bullocks always fatten the betther for it. I hope you'll bleed well now, sir."

"Thady, I don't like the curl of your nose; an', moreover, I have always found you prone to sedition. You remember your conduct at the 'barring out.' I tell you it's well that your worthy father is a dacent, wealthy man, or I'd be apt to give you a *memoria technica* on the *subtratum*, Thady."

"God be praised for my father's wealth, sir! But I'd never wish to have a good memory in the way you mention."

"Faith, an' I'll be apt to add that to your other qualities, if you don't take care of yourself."

"I want no such addition, masther! if you do, you'll be apt to subtract yourself from this neighbourhood, an', maybe, there won't be more than a cypher gone out of it, afther all."

"Thady, you're a wag," exclaimed the crestfallen pedagogue; "take the lad to your own sate, and show him his task. How is your sister's sore throat, Thady?"

"Why, sir," replied the benevolent young wit, "she's betther than I am. She can *swallow* more, sir."

"Not of larnin', Thady; there you've the widest gullet in the parish."

"My father's the richest man in it, masther," replied Thady. "I think, sir, my gullet and his purse are much about the same size—wid *you*."

"Thady, you're first-rate at a reply, but exceedingly deficient in the retort courteous. Take the lad to your sate, I say, and see how far he is advanced, and what he is fit for. I suppose, as you are so ginerous, you will volunteer to tache him yourself."

"I'll do that wid pleasure, sir; but I'd like to know whether *you* intind to tache him or not."

"An' I'd like to know, Thady, who's to pay me for it if I do. A purty return Michael Rooney made me for making him such a linguist as he is. 'You're a tyrant,' said he, when he grew up, 'and instead of expecting me to thank you for your instructions, you ought to thank me for not preparing you for the county hospital, as a memento of the cruelty and brutality you made me feel when I had the misfortune to be a poor scholar under you.' And so, because he became curate of the parish, he showed me the outside of it."

"But will you tache this poor young boy, sir?"

"Let me know who's to guarantee his payments?"

"I have money myself, sir, to pay you for two years," replied Jemmy. "They told me, sir, that you were a great scholar, and I refused to stop in other schools by rason of the name you have for Latin an' Greek."

"*Verbum sat.*," exclaimed the barefaced knave. "Come here. Now, you see, I persave you have dacency. Here is your task; get that half-page by heart. You have a cute look, an' I've no doubt but the stuff's in you. Come to me afther dismiss, 'till we have a little talk together."

He accordingly pointed out his task, after which he placed him at his side, lest the inexperienced boy might be put on his guard by any of the scholars. In this intention, however, he was frustrated by Thady, who, as he thoroughly detested the knavish tyrant, resolved to caution the poor scholar against his dishonesty. Thady, indeed, most heartily despised the mercenary pedagogue, not only for his obsequiousness to the rich, but on account of his severity to the

children of the poor. About two o'clock the young wag went out for a few minutes, and immediately returned in great haste to inform the master that Mr. Delany, the parish priest, and two other gentlemen, wished to see him over at the Cross Keys, an inn which was kept at a place called the Nine-Mile House, within a few perches of the school. The parish priest, though an ignorant, insipid old dunce, was the master's patron, and his slightest wish a divine law to him. The little despot, forgetting his prey, instantly repaired to the Cross Keys, and in his absence, Thady, together with the larger boys of the school, made M'Evoy acquainted with the fraud about to be practised on him.

"His intintion," said they, "is to keep you at home to-night, in ordher to get whatever money you have into his own hands, that he may keep it safe for you; but if you give him a penny you may bid farewell to it. Put it in the curate's hands," added Thady, "or in my father's, an' thin it'll be safe. At all evints, don't stay wid him this night. He'll take your money, and then turn you off in three or four weeks."

"I didn't intind to give him my money," replied Jemmy; "a schoolmaster I met on my way here bid me not to do it. I'll give it to the priest."

"Give it to the curate," said Thady—"wid him it'll be safe; for the parish priest doesn't like to throuble himself wid anything of the kind."

This was agreed upon; the boy was prepared against the designs of the master, and a plan laid down for his future conduct. In the meantime, the latter re-entered the school in a glow of indignation and disappointment.

Thady, however, disregarded him; and as the master knew that the influence of the boy's father could at any time remove him from the parish, his anger subsided without any very violent consequences. The parish priest was his avowed patron, it is true; but if the parish priest knew that Mr. O'Rorke was dissatisfied with him, that moment he would join Mr. O'Rorke in expelling him from the neighbourhood. Mr. O'Rorke was a wealthy and hospitable man, but the schoolmaster was neither the one nor the other.

During school-hours that day many a warm-hearted urchin entered into conversation with the poor scholar: some moved by curiosity to hear his brief and simple history; others anxious to offer him a temporary asylum in their father's houses; and several to know if he had the requisite books, assuring him that, if he had not, they would lend them to him. These proofs of artless generosity touched the homeless youth's heart the more acutely inasmuch as he could perceive but too clearly that the eye of the master rested upon him, from time to time, with no auspicious glance.

When the scholars were dismissed, a scene occurred which was calculated to produce a smile although it certainly placed the poor scholar in a predicament by no means agreeable. It resulted from a contest among the boys as to who should first bring him home. The

master, who, by that cunning for which the knavish are remarkable, had discovered in the course of the day that his design upon the boy's money was understood, did not ask him to his house. The contest was, therefore, among the scholars, who, when the master had disappeared from the school-room, formed themselves into a circle, of which Jemmy was the centre, each pressing his claim to secure him.

"The right's wid me," exclaimed Thady. "I stood to him all day, an' I say I'll have him for this night. Come wid me, Jimmy. Didn't I do most for you to-day?"

"I'll never forget your kindness," replied poor Jemmy, quite alarmed at the boisterous symptoms of pugilism which already began to appear. In fact, many a tiny fist was shut, as a suitable accompaniment to the arguments with which they enforced their assumed rights.

"There now," continued Thady, "that puts an ind to it; he says he'll never forget my kindness. That's enough, come wid me, Jimmy."

"*Is it* enough?" said a lad, who, if his father was less wealthy than Thady's, was resolved to put strength of arm against strength of purse. "Maybe it isn't enough! *I* say I bar it, if your fadher was fifty times as rich! Rich! Arrah, don't be comin' over us in regard of your riches, man alive! I'll bring the sthrange boy home this very night, an' it isn't your father's dirty money that'll prevint me!"

"I'd advise you to get a double ditch about your nose," replied Thady, "before you begin to say anything disrespectful aginst my father. Don't think to ballyrag over me. *I'll* bring the boy, for I have the best right to him. Didn't I *do*[1] the masther on his account?"

"A double ditch about my nose?"

"Aye!"

"Are you able to fight me?"

"I'm able to thry it, anyhow, an' willin' too."

"Do you *say* you're able to fight me?"

"I'll bring the boy home, whether or not."

"Thady's not your match, Jack Ratigan," said another boy. "Why don't you challenge your match?"

"If *you* say a word, I'll half-sole your eye. Let him *say* whether he's able to fight me like a man or not. That's the chat."

"Half-sole my eye! Thin here I am, an' why don't you do it. You're crowin' over a boy that you're bigger than. *I'll* fight you for Thady. Now half-sole my eye if you dar! Eh? Here's my eye now! Arrah, be the holy man, I'd——Don't we know the white hen's in you. Didn't Barny Murtagh cow you at the black pool, on Thursday last, whin we wor bathin'."

"Come, Ratigan," said Thady, "peel an' turn out. I say I *am* able to fight you: an' I'll make you ate your words aginst my father, by way of givin' you your dinner. An' I'll make the dacent strange boy walk home wid me over your body—that is, if he'd not be afraid to dirty his feet."

Ratigan and Thady immediately set to, and in a few minutes there

[1] Outwit.

were scarcely a little pair of fists present that were not at work, either on behalf of the two combatants, or with a view to determine their own private rights in being the first to exercise hospitality towards the amazed poor scholar. The fact was that while the two largest boys were arguing the point, about thirty or forty minor disputes all ran parallel to theirs, and their mode of decision was immediately adopted by the pugnacious urchins of the school. In this manner they were engaged, poor Jemmy attempting to tranquillise and separate them, when the master, armed in all his terrors, presented himself.

With the tact of a sly old disciplinarian, he first secured the door, and instantly commenced the agreeable task of promiscuous castigation. Heavy and vindictive did his arm descend upon those whom he suspected to have cautioned the boy against his rapacity; nor amongst the warm-hearted lads whom he thwacked so cunningly was Thady passed over with a tender hand. Springs, bouncings, doublings, blowing of fingers, scratching of heads, and rubbing of elbows—shouts of pain, and doleful exclamations, accompanied by action that displayed surpassing agility—marked the effect with which he plied the instrument of punishment. In the meantime, the spirit of reaction, to use a modern phrase, began to set in. The master, while thus engaged in dispensing justice, first received a rather vigorous thwack on the ear from behind by an anonymous contributor, who gifted him with what is called a musical ear, for it sang during five minutes afterwards. The monarch, when turning round to ascertain the traitor, received another insult on the most indefensible side, and that with a cordiality of manner that induced him to send his right hand reconnoitring the invaded part. He wheeled round a second time with more alacrity than before; but nothing less than the head of Janus could have secured him on the occasion. The anonymous contributor sent him a fresh article. This was supported by another kick behind; the turf began to fly; one after another came in contact with his head and shoulders so rapidly that he found himself, instead of being the assailant, actually placed upon his defence. The insurrection spread, the turf flew more thickly; his subjects closed in upon him in a more compact body; every little fist itched to be at him; the larger boys boldly laid in the facers, punched him in the stomach, treated him most opprobriously behind, every kick and cuff accompanied by a memento of his cruelty; in short, they compelled him, like Charles the Tenth, ignominiously to fly from his dominions.

On finding the throne vacant, some of them suggested that it ought to be overturned altogether. Thady, however, who was the ring leader of the rebellion, persuaded them to be satisfied with what they had accomplished, and consequently succeeded in preventing them from destroying the fixtures.

Again they surrounded the poor scholar, who, feeling himself the cause of the insurrection, appeared an object of much pity. Such was his grief that he could scarcely reply to them. Their consolation on witnessing his distress was overwhelming; they desired him to think nothing of it; if the master, they told him, should wreak his resent-

ment on *him*, "be the holy farmer, they would *pay*[1] the *masther*." Thady's claim was now undisputed; with only the injury of a black eye, and a lip swelled to the size of a sausage, he walked home in triumph, the poor scholar accompanying him.

The master, who feared that this open contempt of his authority, running up, as it did, into a very unpleasant species of retaliation, was something like a signal for him to leave the parish, felt rather more of the penitent the next morning than did any of his pupils. He was by no means displeased, therefore, to see them drop in about the usual hour. They came, however, not one by one, but in compact groups, each officered by two or three of the larger boys; for they feared that had they entered singly he might have punished them singly, until his vengeance should be satisfied. It was by bitter and obstinate struggles that they succeeded in repressing their mirth, when he appeared at his desk with one of his eyes literally closed, and his nose considerably improved in size and richness of colour. When they were all assembled, he hemmed several times, and in a woe-begone tone of voice, split—by a feeble attempt at maintaining authority, and suppressing his terrors—into two parts that jarred most ludicrously, he briefly addressed them as follows:—

"Gintlemen classics—I have been now twenty-six years engaged in the propagation of Latin and Greek litherature, in conjunction wid Mathematics, but never until yesterday has my influence been spurned; never until yesterday have sacrilegious hands been laid upon my person; never until yesterday have I been kicked—insidiously, ungallantly, and treacherously kicked—by my own subjects. No, gintlemen—and whether I ought to bestow that respectable epithet upon you after yesterday's proceedings is a matter which admits of dispute—never before has the lid of my eye been laid drooping, and that in such a manner that I must be blind to the conduct of half my pupils, whether I will or not. You have complained, it appears, of my want of impartiality; but God knows you have compelled me to be partial for a week to come. Neither blame me if I may appear to look upon you with scorn for the next fortnight; for I am compelled to turn up my nose at you much against my own inclination. You need never want an illustration of the *naso adunco* of Horace again—I'm a living example of it. That, and the doctrine of projectile forces, have been exemplified in a manner that will prevent me from ever relishing these subjects in future. No king can consider himself properly such until after he has received the oil of consecration: but you, it appears, think differently. You have unkinged me first, and anointed me afterwards; but, I say, no potentate would relish such unction. It smells confoundedly of republicanism. Maybe this is what *you* understand by the Republic of Letters; but if it be, I would advise you to change your principles. You treated my ribs as if they were the ribs of a common man; my shins you took liberties wid even to excoriation; my head you made a target of

[1] Punish.

/or your hardest turf ; and my nose you dishonoured to my face. Was this ginerous ? was it discreet ? was it subordinate ? and, above all, was it *classical ?* However, I will show you what greatness of mind is ; I will convince you that it is more noble and god-like to forgive an injury, or rather five dozen injuries, than to avenge one ; when—hem—yes, I say, when I—I—*might* so easily avenge it. I now present you wid an amnesty ; return to your allegiance ; but never, while in this siminary, under my tuition, attimpt to take the execution of the laws into your own hands. Homerians, come up?"

This address, into which he purposely threw a dash of banter and mock gravity, delivered with the accompaniments of his swelled nose and drooping eye, pacified his audience more readily than a serious one would have done. It was received without any reply or symptom of disrespect, unless the occasional squeak of a suppressed laugh, or the visible shaking of many sides with inward convulsions, might be termed such.

In the course of the day, it is true, their powers of maintaining gravity were put to a severe test, particularly when, while hearing a class, he began to adjust his drooping eyelid, or coax back his nose into its natural position. On these occasions a sudden pause might be noticed in the business of the class ; the boy's voice who happened to read at the time would fail him ; and on resuming his sentence by command of the master, its tone was tremulous, and scarcely adequate to the task of repeating the words without his bursting into laughter. The master observed all this clearly enough, but his mind was already made up to take no further notice of what had happened.

All this, however, conduced to render the situation of the poor scholar much more easy, or rather less penal, than it would otherwise have been. Still the innocent lad was on all possible occasions a butt for this miscreant. To miss a word was a pretext for giving him a cruel blow. To arrive two or three minutes later than the appointed hour was certain on his part to be attended with immediate punishment. Jemmy bore it all with silent heroism. He shed no tear—he uttered no remonstrance ; but under the anguish of pain so barbarously inflicted, he occasionally looked round upon his schoolfellows with an expression of silent entreaty that was seldom lost upon them. Cruel to him the master often was, but to inhuman barbarity the large scholars never permitted him to descend. Whenever any of the wealthier farmers' sons had neglected their lessons, or deserved chastisement, the mercenary creature substituted a joke for the birch ; but as soon as the son of a poor man, or, which was better still, the poor scholar, came before him, he transferred that punishment which the wickedness or idleness of respectable boys deserved, to his or their shoulders. For this outrageous injustice the hard-hearted old villain had some plausible excuse ready, so that it was in many cases difficult for Jemmy's generous companions to intefere in his behalf, or parry the sophistry of such a petty tyrant.

In this miserable way did he pass over the tedious period of a year, going about every night in rotation with the scholars, and severely

beaten on all possible occasions by the master. His conduct and manners won him the love and esteem of all except his tyrant instructor. His assiduity was remarkable, and his progress in the elements of English and classical literature surprisingly rapid. This added considerably to his character, and procured him additional respect. It was not long until he made himself useful and obliging to all the boys beneath his standing in the school. These services he rendered with an air of such kindness, and a grace so naturally winning, that the attachment of his schoolfellows increased towards him from day to day. Thady was his patron on all occasions; neither did the curate neglect him. The latter was his banker, for the boy had very properly committed his purse to his keeping. At the expiration of every quarter the schoolmaster received the amount of his bill, which he never failed to send in when due.

Jemmy had not, during his first year's residence in the south, forgotten to request the kind curate's interference with the landlord on behalf of his father. To be the instrument of restoring his family to their former comfortable holding under Colonel B—— would have afforded him, without excepting the certainty of his own eventual success, the highest gratification. Of this, however, there was no hope, and nothing remained for him but assiduity in his studies, and patience under the merciless scourge of his teacher. In addition to an engaging person and agreeable manners, nature had gifted him with a high order of intellect, and great powers of acquiring knowledge. The latter he applied to the business before him with indefatigable industry. The school at which he settled was considered the first in Munster; and the master, notwithstanding his known severity, stood high, and justly so, in the opinion of the people, as an excellent classical and mathematical scholar. Jemmy applied himself to the study of both, and at the expiration of his second year had made such progress that he stood without a rival in the school.

It is usual, as we have said, for the poor scholar to go night after night, in rotation, with his schoolfellows; he is particularly welcome in the houses of those farmers whose children are not so far advanced as himself. It is expected that he should instruct them in the evenings and enable them to prepare their lessons for the following day, a task which he always performs with pleasure, because in teaching them he is confirming his own mind in the knowledge which he has previously acquired. Towards the end of the second year, however, he ceased to circulate in this manner. Two or three of the most independent parishioners, whose sons were only commencing their studies, agreed to keep him week about; an arrangement highly convenient to him, as by that means he was not so frequently dragged, as he had been, to the remotest parts of the parish. Being an expert penman, he acted also as secretary of grievances to the poor, who frequently employed him to draw up petitions to obdurate landlords, or to their more obdurate agents, and letters to soldiers in all parts of the world from their anxious and affectionate relations. All these little services he performed kindly and promptly; many a blessing was fervently

invoked upon his head; the "good word" and "the prayer" were all they could afford, as they said, "to the *beuchal dhas oge*[1] that tuck the world an him for sake o' the larnin', and that hasn't the kindliness o' the mother's breath an' the mother's hand near him, the crathur."

About the middle of the third year he was once more thrown upon the general hospitality of the people. The three farmers with whom he had lived for the preceding six months emigrated to America, as did many others of that class which, in this country, most nearly approximates to the substantial yeomanry of England. The little purse, too, which he had placed in the hands of the kind priest, was exhausted; a season of famine, sickness, and general distress had set in; and the master, on understanding that he was without money, became diabolically savage. In short, the boy's difficulties increased to a perplexing degree. Even Thady and his grown companions, who usually interposed in his behalf when the master became excessive in correcting him, had left the school, and now the prospect before him was dark and cheerless indeed. For a few months longer, however, he struggled on, meeting every difficulty with meek endurance. Since his very boyhood he had reverenced the sanctions of religion, and was actuated by a strong devotional spirit. He trusted in God, and worshipped him night and morning with a sincere heart.

At this crisis he was certainly an object of pity; his clothes, which for some time before were reduced to tatters, he had replaced by a cast-off coat and small-clothes, a present from his friend the curate, who never abandoned him. This worthy young man could not afford him money, for as he had but fifty pounds a-year with which to clothe, subsist himself, keep a horse, and pay rent, it was hardly to be expected that his benevolence could be extensive. In addition to this, famine and contagious disease raged with formidable violence in the parish; so that the claims upon his bounty of hundreds who lay huddled together in cold cabins, in out-houses, and even behind ditches, were incessant as well as heartrending. The number of interments that took place daily in the parish was awful; nothing could be seen but funerals attended by groups of ragged and emaciated creatures, from whose hollow eyes gleamed forth the wolfish fire of famine. The wretched mendicants were countless, and the number of coffins that lay on the public roads—where, attended by the nearest relatives of the deceased, they had been placed for the purpose of procuring charity—were greater than ever had been remembered by the oldest inhabitant.

Such was the state of the parish when our poor scholar complained one day in school of severe illness. The early symptoms of the prevailing epidemic were well known, and, on examining more closely into his situation, it was clear that, according to the phraseology of the people, he had "got the faver on his back"—had caught "a heavy load of the faver." The Irish are particularly apprehensive of contagious maladies. The moment it had been discovered that Jemmy

[1] The pretty *young* boy. *Boy*, in Ireland, does not always imply youth.

was infected, his schoolfellows avoided him with a feeling of terror scarcely credible, and the inhuman master was delighted at any circumstance, however calamitous, that might afford him a pretext for driving the friendless youth out of the school.

"Take," said he "everything belongin' to you out of my establishment: you were always a plague to me, but now more than ever. Be quick, sarra, and nidificate for yourself somewhere else. Do you want to thranslate my siminary into an hospital, and myself into Lazarus as president? Go off, you wild-goose, and conjugate *ægroto* wherever you find a convenient spot to do it in."

The poor boy silently and with difficulty arose, collected his books, and slinging on his satchel, looked to his schoolfellows, as if he had said, "Which of you will afford me a place where to lay my aching head?" All, however, kept aloof from him; he had caught the contagion, and the contagion, they knew, had swept the people away in vast numbers.

At length he spoke. "Is there any boy among you," he inquired, "who will bring me home? You know I am a stranger, an' far from my own, God help me!"

This was followed by a profound silence. Not one of those who had so often befriended him, or who would, on any other occasion, share their bed and their last morsel with him, would even touch his person, much less allow him, when thus plague-stricken, to take shelter under their roof. Such are the effects of selfishness when it is opposed only by the force of those natural qualities that are not elevated into a sense of duty by clear and profound views of Christian truth. It is one thing to perform a kind action from constitutional impulse, and another to perform it as a fixed duty, perhaps contrary to that impulse.

Jemmy, on finding himself avoided like a Hebrew leper of old, silently left the school, and walked on without knowing whither he should ultimately direct his steps. He thought of his friend the priest, but the distance between him and his place of abode was greater, he felt, than his illness would permit him to travel. He walked on, therefore, in such a state of misery and dereliction as can scarcely be conceived, much less described. His head ached excessively, an intense pain shot like death-pangs through his lower back and loins, his face was flushed and his head giddy. In this state he proceeded, without money or friends, without a house to shelter him, a bed on which to lie, far from his own relations, and with the prospect of death, under circumstances peculiarly dreadful, before him! He tottered on, however, the earth, as he imagined, reeling under him: the heavens, he thought, streaming with fire, and the earth indistinct and discoloured. Home, the paradise of the absent—home, the heaven of the affections—with all its tenderness and blessed sympathies, rushed upon his heart. His father's deep but quiet kindness, his mother's sedulous love; his brothers—all that they had been to him—these, with their thousand heart-stirring associations, started into life before him again and again. But he was now ill, and the mother—ah! the enduring sense of that mother's love placed her

brightest and strongest and tenderest in the far and distant group which his imagination bodied forth.

"Mother!" he exclaimed—"oh, mother, why—why did I ever lave you? Mother! the son you loved is dyin' without a kind word—lonely and neglected in a strange land! Oh, my *own* mother! why did I ever lave you?"

The conflict between his illness and his affections overcame him: he staggered—he grasped as if for assistance at the vacant air—he fell, and lay for some time in a state of insensibility.

The season was then that of midsummer, and early meadows were falling before the scythe. As the boy sank to the earth, a few labourers were eating their scanty dinner of bread and milk so near him that only a dry low ditch ran between him and them. They had heard his words indistinctly, and one of them was putting the milk bottle to his lips, when, attracted by the voice, he looked in the direction of the speaker, and saw him fall. They immediately recognised "the poor scholar," and in a moment were attempting to recover him.

"Why thin, my poor fellow, what's *a shaughran* wid you?"

Jemmy started for a moment, looked about him, and asked, "Where am I?"

"Faitha, thin, you're in Rory Connor's field, widin a few perches of the high road. But what ails you, poor boy?—is it sick you are?"

"It is," he replied; "I have got the faver. I had to lave school; none o' them would take me home, an' I doubt I must die in a Christian counthry undher the open canopy of heaven. Oh, for God's sake, don't lave me! Bring me to some hospital, or into the next town, where people may know that I'm sick, an' maybe some kind Christian will relieve me!"

The moment he mentioned "Fever" the men involuntarily drew back, after having laid him reclining against the green ditch.

"Thin, thundher an' turf, what's to be done?" exclaimed one of them, thrusting his spread fingers into his hair. "Is the poor boy to die widout help among Christyeens like uz?"

"But hasn't he the sickness?" exclaimed another: "an' in that case, Pether, what's to be done?"

"Why, you gommoch, isn't that what I'm wantin' to know? You wor ever an' always a dam' ass, Paddy, except before you wor born, an' thin you wor like Major M'Curragh, worse nor nothin'. Why the sarra do you be spakin' about the sickness, the Lord protect us, whin you know I'm so timersome of it?"

"But considher," said another, edging off from Jemmy, however, "that he's a poor scholar, an' that there's a great blessin' to thim that assists the likes of him."

"Ay, is there that, sure enough, Dan; but you see—blur-an-age, what's to be done? He can't die this-a-way, wid nobody wid him but himself."

"Let us help him!" exclaimed another "for *God's* sake, an' we won't be apt to take it thin."

"Ay, but how can we help him, Frank? Oh, bedad, it ud be a murdherin' shame, all out, to let the crathur die by himself, widout company, so it would."

"No one will take him in for fraid o' the sickness. Why, I'll tell you what we'll do. Let us skhame the remainder o' this day off o' the Major, an' build a shed for him on the road-side here, jist against the ditch. It's as dhry as powdher. Thin we can go through the neighbours, an' get thim to sit near him time about, an' to bring him little dhreeniens o' nourishment."

"Divil a purtier! Come, thin, let us get a lot o' the neighbours, and set about it, poor bouchal. Who knows but it may bring down a blessin' upon us, aither in this world or the next."

"Amin! I pray Gorra! an' so it will, sure! doesn't the Catechiz say it? 'There is but one Church,' says the Catechiz, 'one Faith, an' one Baptism.' Bedad, there's a power o' fine larnin' in the same Catechiz, so there is, an' mighty improvin'."

An Irishman never works for wages with half the zeal which he displays when working *con amore*. Ere many hours had passed, a number of the neighbours had assembled, and Jemmy found himself on a bunch of clean straw in a little shed erected for him at the edge of the road.

Perhaps it would be impossible to conceive a more gloomy state of misery than that in which young M'Evoy found himself. Stretched on the side of the public road, in a shed formed of a few loose sticks covered over with "scraws"—that is, the sward of the earth pared into thin stripes—removed about fifty perches from any human habitation—his body racked with a furious and oppressive fever—his mind conscious of all the horrors by which he was surrounded—without the comforts even of a bed or bedclothes—and, what was worst of all, those from whom he might expect kindness afraid to approach him! Lying helpless, under these circumstances, it ought not to be wondered at if he wished that death might at once close his extraordinary sufferings, and terminate those struggles which filial piety had prompted him to encounter.

This certainly is a dark picture, but our humble hero knew that even there the power and goodness of God could support him. The boy trusted in God; and when removed into his little shed, and stretched upon his clean straw, he felt that his situation was, in good sooth, comfortable, when contrasted with what it might have been if left to perish behind a ditch, exposed to the scorching heat of the sun by day, and the dews of heaven by night. He felt the hand of God even in this, and placed himself, with a short but fervent prayer, under his fatherly protection.

Irishmen, however, are not just that description of persons who can pursue their usual avocations and see a fellow-creature die without such attentions as they can afford him; not precisely so bad as that, gentle reader! Jemmy had not been two hours on his straw when a second shed, much larger than his own, was raised within a dozen yards of it. In this a fire was lit; a small pot was then procured

milk was sent in, and such other little comforts brought together as they supposed necessary for the sick boy. Having accomplished these matters, a kind of guard was set to watch and nurse-tend him; a pitchfork was got, on the prongs of which they intended to reach him bread across the ditch; and a long-shafted shovel was borrowed, on which to furnish him drink with safety to themselves. That inextinguishable vein of humour, which in Ireland mingles even with death and calamity, was also visible here. The ragged, half-starved creatures laughed heartily at the oddity of their own inventions, and enjoyed the ingenuity with which they made shift to meet the exigencies of the occasion, without in the slightest degree having their sympathy and concern for the afflicted youth lessened.

When their arrangements were completed, one of them (he of the scythe) made a little whey, which, in lieu of a spoon, he stirred with the end of his tobacco knife; he then extended it across the ditch upon the shovel, after having put it in a tin porringer.

"Do you want a taste o' whey, avourneen?"

"Oh, I do," replied Jemmy; "give me a drink, for God's sake."

"There it is, a bouchal, on the shovel. Musha if myself rightly knows what side you're lyin' an, or I'd put it as near your lips as I could. Come, man, be stout, don't be cast down, at all at all; sure, bud-an-age, we're shovellin' the whey to you, anyhow."

"I have it," replied the boy—"oh, I have it. May God never forget this to you, whoever you are."

"Faith, if you want to know who I am, I'm Pether Connor the mower, that never seen to-morrow. Be gorra, poor boy, you mustn't let your spirits down, at all at all. Sure the neighbours is all bint to watch an' take care of you. May I take away the shovel?—an' they've built a brave snug shed here beside yours, where they'll stay wid you time about until you get well. We'll feed you wid whey enough, bekase we've made up our minds to stale lots o' sweet milk for you. Ned Branagan an' I will milk Rody Hartigan's cows to-night, wid the help o' God. Divil a bit sin in it, so there isn't, an' if there is, too, be my sowl there's no harm in it, anyway—for he's but a nager himself, the same Rody. So, acushla, keep a light heart, for, be gorra, you're sure o' the thin pair o' trowsers, anyhow. Don't think you're desarted—for you're not. It's all in regard o' bein' afeard o' this faver, or it's not this way you'd be; but, as I said a while agone, when you want anything, spake, for you'll still find two or three of us beside you here, night an' day. Now won't you promise to keep your mind asy, when you know that we're beside you?"

"God bless you," replied Jemmy, "you've taken a weight off my heart. I thought I'd die wid nobody near me at all."

"Oh, the sorra fear of it. Keep your heart up. We'll stale lots o' milk for you. Bad scran to the baste in the parish but we'll milk, sooner nor you'd want the whey, you crathur, you."

The boy felt relieved, but his malady increased; and were it not that the confidence of being thus watched and attended to supported him, it is more than probable he would have sunk under it.

When the hour of closing the day's labour arrived, Major —— came down to inspect the progress which his mowers had made, and the goodness of the crop upon his meadows. No sooner was he perceived at a distance than the scythes were instantly resumed, and the mowers pursued their employment with an appearance of zeal and honesty that could not be suspected.

On arriving at the meadows, however, he was evidently startled at the miserable day's work they had performed.

"Why, Connor," said he, addressing the nurse-tender, "how is this? I protest you have not performed half a day's labour! This is miserable and shameful."

"Bedad, major, it's thrue for your honour, sure enough. It's a poor day's work, the never a doubt of it. But be all the books that *n*ever was opened or shut, busier men nor we were since mornin' couldn't be had for love or money. You see, major, these meadows—bad luck to them!—God pardon me for cursin' the harmless crathurs, for sure, 'tisn't their fau't, sir; but you see, major, I'll insinse you into it. Now look here, your honour. Did you ever see deeper meadow nor that same since you war foal—hem—since you war born, your honour? Maybe, your honour, major, ud just take the scythe an' sthrive to cut a swaythe?"

"Nonsense, Connor; don't you know I cannot."

"Thin, be gorra, sir, I wisht you could thry it. I'd kiss the book, we did more labour, an' worked harder this day, nor any day for the last fortnight. If it was light grass, sir—see here, major, here's a light bit—now, look at how the scythe runs through it! Thin look at here agin—jist observe this, major—why, murdher alive, don't you see how slow she goes through *that* where the grass is *heavy!* Bedad, major, you'll be made up this season wid your hay, anyhow. Divil carry the finer meadow ever I put scythe in nor the same meadow, God bless it!"

"Yes, I see it, Connor. I agree with you as to its goodness. But the reason of that is, Connor, that I always direct my steward myself in laying it down for grass. Yes, you're right, Connor; if the meadow were light, you could certainly mow comparatively a greater space in a day."

"Be the livin' farmer, God pardon me for swearin', it's a pleasure to have dalins wid a gintleman like you, that knows things as cute as if you war a mower yourself, your honour. Bedad, I'll go bail, sir, it wouldn't be hard to tache you that same."

"Why, to tell you the truth, Connor, you have hit me off pretty well. I'm beginning to get a taste for agriculture."

"But," said Connor, scratching his head, "won't your honour allow us the price of a glass, or a pint o' porther, for our hard day's work. Bad cess to me, sir, but this meadow 'ill play the puck wid us afore we get it finished. Atween ourselves, sir—if it wouldn't be takin' freedoms—if you'd look to *your own* farmin' *yourself.* The steward, sir, is a dacent kind of man, but, sowl, he couldn't hould a candle to your honour in seein' to the best way of doing a thing, sir. Won't you allow us glasses apiece, your honour? Faix, we're kilt entirely, so we are."

"Here is half a crown among you, Connor; but don't get drunk."

"Dhrunk! Musha, long may you reign, sir! Be the scythe in my hand, I'd rather—och, faix, you're one o' the ould sort, sir—the raal Irish gintleman, your honour. An' sure your name's far an' near for that, anyhow."

Connor's face would have done the heart of Brooke or Cruikshank good, had either of them seen it charged with humour so rich as that which beamed from it when the Major left them to enjoy their own comments upon what had happened.

"Oh, be the livin' farmer," said Connor, "are we alive at all afther *doin'* the major! Oh, thin, the curse o' the crows upon you, major darlin', but you are a *Manus!* The damn' rip o' the world, that wouldn't give the breath he breathes to the poor for God's sake, an' he'll *threwn* a man half a crown that'll blarney him for farmin', an' him doesn't know the differ atween a Cork-red an' a Yallow-leg!"

"Faith, he's the boy that knows how to make a Judy of himself, anyway, Pether," exclaimed another. "The devil a hapurth asier nor to give these quality the bag to hould, so there isn't—an' they think themselves so cute, too!"

"Augh!" said a third, "couldn't a man find the soft side o' them, as asy as make out the way to his own nose widout bein' led to it. Devil a sin it is to *do them*, anyway. Sure he thinks we wor tooth an' nail at the meadow all day; an' me thought I'd never recover it, to see Pether here—the rise he tuck out of him! Ha, ha, ha—och, och, —murdher, oh!"

"Faith," exclaimed Connor, "'twas good, you see, to help the poor scholar; only for it we couldn't get shkamin' the half-crown out of him. I think we ought to give the crathur half of it, an' him so sick —he'll be wantin' it worse nor ourselves."

"Oh, be gorra, he's fairly entitled to that. I vote him fifteen-pince."

"Surely!" they exclaimed unanimously—"tundher-an'-turf, wasn't he the manes of gettin' it for us?"

"Jemmy, a bouchal," said Connor, across the ditch to M'Evoy, "are you sleepin'?"

"Sleepin'! Oh, no," replied Jemmy, "I'd give the wide world for one wink of asy sleep."

"Well, aroon, here's fifteen pince for you, that we shkam—will I tell him how we got it?"

"No, don't," replied his neighbours, "the boy's given to devotion, an', maybe, might scruple to take it."

"Here's fifteen pince, avourneen, on the shovel, that we're giving you *for God's sake.* If you *over*[1] this, won't you offer up a prayer for us? Won't you, avick?"

"I can never forget your kindness," replied Jemmy. "I will always pray for you, an' may God for ever bless you an' yours."

"Poor crathur! May the heavens above have prosthration on him.

[1] That is, to get over—to survive.

Upon my sowl, it's good to have his blessin' an' his prayer. Now don't fret, Jemmy ; we're lavin' you wid a lot o' neighbours here. They'll watch you time about, so that whin you want anything, call, avourneen, an' there'll still be someone here to answer. God bless you, an' restore you, till we come wid the milk we'll stale for you wid the help o' God. Bad cess to me, but it ud be a mortual sin, so it would, to let the poor boy die at all, an' him so far from home. For, as the Catechiz says, 'There is but one Faith, one Church, and one Baptism!' Well, the readin' that's in that Catechiz is mighty improvin', glory be to God!"

It would be utterly impossible to detail the affliction which our poor scholar suffered in this wretched shed for the space of a fortnight, notwithstanding the efforts of those kind-hearted people to render his situation comfortable.

The little wigwam they had constructed near him was never, even for a moment, during his whole illness without two or three persons ready to attend him. In the evening their numbers increased ; a fire was always kept burning, over which a little pot for making whey or gruel was suspended. At night they amused each other with anecdotes and laughter, and occasionally with songs, when certain that their patient was not asleep. Their excursions to steal milk for him were performed with uncommon glee, and related among themselves with great humour. These thefts would have been unnecessary, had not the famine which then prevailed through the province been so excessive. The crowds that swarmed about the houses of wealthy farmers, supplicating a morsel to keep body and soul together, resembled nothing which our English readers ever had an opportunity of seeing. Ragged, emaciated creatures tottered about with an expression of wildness and voracity in their gaunt features ; fathers and mothers reeled under the burthen of their beloved children, the latter either sick, or literally expiring for want of food ; and the widow, in many instances, was compelled to lay down her head to die with the wail, the feeble wail, of her withered orphans mingling with her last moans! In such a state of things it was difficult to procure a sufficient quantity of milk to allay the unnatural thirst even of one individual, when parched by the scorching heat of a fever. Notwithstanding this, his wants were for the most part anticipated, so far as their means would allow them ; his shed was kept waterproof; and either shovel or pitchfork always ready to be extended to him, by way of substitution for the right hand of fellowship.

When he called for anything, the usual observation was, "Husht! the crathur's callin' ; I must take the shovel an' see what he wants."

There were times, it is true, when the mirth of the poor fellows was very low, for hunger was generally among themselves ; there were times when their own little shed presented a touching and melancholy spectacle—perhaps we ought also to add, a noble one ; for to contemplate a number of men, considered rude and semi-barbarous, devoting themselves, in the midst of privations the most cutting and oppressive, to the care and preservation of a strange lad,

merely because they knew him to be without friends and protection, is to witness a display of virtue truly magnanimous. The food on which some of the persons were occasionally compelled to live was blood boiled up with a little oatmeal; for when a season of famine occurs in Ireland, the people usually bleed the cows and bullocks to preserve themselves from actual starvation. It is truly a sight of appalling misery to behold feeble women gliding across the country, carrying their cans and pitchers, actually trampling upon fertility and fatness, and collected in the corner of some grazier's farm, waiting, gaunt and ravenous as Ghouls, for their portion of blood. During these melancholy periods of want, everything in the shape of an esculent disappears. The miserable creatures will pick up chickenweed, nettles, sorrel, bugloss, preshagh, and sea-weed, which they will boil and eat with the voracity of persons writhing under the united agonies of hunger and death! Yet, singular to say, the very country thus groaning under such a terrible sweep of famine is actually pouring from all her ports a profusion of food, day after day; flinging it from her fertile bosom with the wanton excess of a prodigal oppressed by abundance.

Despite, however, of all that the poor scholar's nurse-guard suffered, he was attended with a fidelity of care and sympathy which no calamity could shake. Nor was this care fruitless; after the fever had passed through its usual stages, he began to recover. In fact, it has been observed, very truly, that scarcely any person has been known to die under circumstances similar to those of the poor scholar. These sheds, the erection of which is not unfrequent in case of fever, have the advantage of pure free air, by which the patient is cooled and refreshed. Be the cause of it what it may, the fact has been established, and we feel satisfaction in being able to adduce our humble hero as an additional proof of the many recoveries which take place in situations apparently so unfavourable to human life. But how is it possible to detail what M'Evoy suffered during this fortnight of intense agony? Not those who can command the luxuries of life—not those who can reach its comforts—nor those who can supply themselves with its bare necessaries—neither the cotter who struggles to support his wife and helpless children—the mendicant who begs from door to door—nor even the felon in his cell—can imagine what he felt in the solitary misery of his feverish bed. Hard is the heart that cannot *feel* his sorrows, when, stretched beside the common way, without a human face to look on, he called upon the mother whose brain, had she known his situation, would have been riven—whose affectionate heart would have been broken by the knowledge of his affliction. It was a situation which afterwards appeared to him dark and terrible. The pencil of the painter could not depict it, nor the pen of the poet describe it, except like a dim vision, which neither the heart nor the imagination are able to give to the world as a tale steeped in the sympathies excited by reality.

His whole heart and soul, as he afterwards acknowledged, were, during his trying illness, *at home*. The voices of his parents, of his sisters, and

of his brothers were always in his ears ; their countenances surrounded his cold and lonely shed ; their hands touched him ; their eyes looked upon him in sorrow—and their tears bedewed him. Even there, the light of his mother's love, though she herself was distant, shone upon his sorrowful couch ; and he has declared that in no past moment of affection did his soul ever burn with a sense of its presence so strongly as it did in the heart-dreams of his severest illness. But God is love, "and tempereth the wind to the shorn lamb."

Much of all his sufferings would have been alleviated, were it not that his two best friends in the parish, Thady and the curate, had been both prostrated by the fever at the same time with himself. There was consequently no person of respectability in the neighbourhood cognisant of his situation. He was left to the humbler class of the peasantry, and honourably did they, with all their errors and ignorances, discharge those duties which greater wealth and greater knowledge would, probably, have left unperformed.

On the morning of the last day he ever intended to spend in the shed, at eleven o'clock, he heard the sounds of horses' feet passing along the road. The circumstance was one quite familiar to him ; but these horsemen, whoever they might be, stopped, and immediately after, two respectable looking men, dressed in black, approached him. His forlorn state and frightfully-wasted appearance startled them, and the younger of the two asked, in a tone of voice which went directly to his heart, how it was they found him in a situation so desolate.

The kind interest implied by the words, and probably a sense of his utterly destitute state, affected him strongly, and he burst into tears. The strangers looked at each other, then at him ; and if looks could express sympathy, theirs expressed it.

"My good boy," said the first, "how is it that we find you in a situation so deplorable and wretched as this? Who are you, or why is it that you have not a friendly roof to shelter you?"

"I'm a poor scholar," replied Jemmy, "the son of honest but reduced parents : I came to this part of the country with the intention of preparing myself for Maynooth, and, if it might plase God, with the hope of being able to raise them out of their distress."

The strangers looked more earnestly at the boy ; sickness had touched his fine intellectual features into a purity of expression almost ethereal. His fair skin appeared nearly transparent, and the light of truth and candour lit up his countenance with a lustre which affliction could not dim.

The other stranger approached him more nearly, stooped for a moment, and felt his pulse.

"How long have you been in this country?" he inquired.

"Nearly three years."

"You have been ill of the fever which is so prevalent ; but how did you come to be left to the chance of perishing upon the highway?"

"Why, sir, the people were afeard to let me into their houses in consequence of the faver. I got ill in school, sir, but no boy would venture

to bring me home, an' the master turned me out, to die, I believe. May God forgive him!"

"Who was your master, my child?"

"The great Mr.——, sir. If Mr. O'Brien, the curate of the parish, hadn't been ill himself at the same time, or if Mr. O'Rorke's son, Thady, hadn't been laid on his back, too, sir, I wouldn't suffer what I did."

"Has the curate been kind to you?"

"Sir, only for him and the big boys I couldn't stay in the school, on account of the master's cruelty, particularly since my money was out."

"You are better now—are you not?" said the other gentleman.

"Thank God, sir!—oh, thanks be to the Almighty, I am! I expect to be able to lave this place to-day or to-morrow."

"And where do you intend to go when you recover?"

The boy himself had not thought of this, and the question came on him so unexpectedly that he could only reply:

"Indeed, sir, I don't know."

"Had you," inquired the second stranger, "testimonials from your parish priest?"

"I had, sir: they are in the hands of Mr. O'Brien. I also had a character from my father's landlord."

"But how," asked the other, "have you existed here during your illness? Have you been long sick?"

"Indeed, I can't tell you, sir, for I don't know how the time passed at all; but I know, sir, that there were always two or three people attendin' me. They sent me whatever they thought I wanted, upon a shovel or a pitchfork, across the ditch, because they were afraid to come near me."

During the early part of the dialogue, two or three old hats, or caubeens, might have been seen moving steadily over from the wigwam to the ditch which ran beside the shed occupied by M'Evoy. Here they remained stationary, for those who wore them were now within hearing of the conversation, and ready to give their convalescent patient a good word, should it be necessary.

"How were you supplied with drink and medicine?" asked the younger stranger.

"As I've just told you, sir," replied Jemmy, "the neighbours here let me want for nothing that they had. They kept me in more whey than I could use; and they got me medicine, too, some way or other. But indeed, sir, during a great part of the time I was ill, I can't say how they attended me: I wasn't sensible, sir, of what was goin' on about me."

One of those who lay behind the ditch now arose, and after a few hems and scratchings of the head, ventured to join in the conversation.

"Pray have you, my man," said the elder of the two, "been acquainted with the circumstances of this boy's illness?"

"Is it the poor scholar, my lord?[1] Oh, thin, bedad, it's myself that

[1] The peasantry always address a Roman Catholic bishop as "my lord."

has that. The poor crathur was in a terrible way all out, so he was He caught the faver in the school beyant one day, an' was turned out by the nager o' the world that he was larnin' from."

"Are you one of the persons who attended him?"

"Och, och, the crathur! what could unsignified people like us do for him, barrin' a thrifle? Anyhow, my lord, it's the meracle o' the world that he was ever able to *over* it at all. Why, sir, good luck to the one of him but suffered as much, wid the help o' God, as ud overcome fifty men!"

"How did you provide him with drink at such a distance from any human habitation?"

"Throth, hard enough we found it, sir, to do that same; but sure, whether or not, my lord, we couldn't be sich nagers as to let him die all out, for want o' somethin' to moisten his throath wid."

"I hope," inquired the other, "you had nothing to do in the milk-stealing which has produced such an outcry in this immediate neighbourhood?"

"Milk-stalin'! Oh, bedad, sir, there never was the likes known afore in the counthry. The Lord forgive them that did it! Be gorra, sir, the wickedness o' the people's mighty improvin', if one ud take warnin' by it, glory be to God!"

"Many of the farmers' cows have been milked at night, Connor—perfectly drained—even my own cows have not escaped; and we who have suffered are certainly determined, if possible, to ascertain those who have committed the theft. I, for my part, have gone even beyond my ability in relieving the wants of the poor during this period of sickness and famine; I therefore deserved this the less."

"By the powdhers, your honour, if any gintleman desarved to have his cows *unmilked*, it's yourself. But, as I said this minute, there's no end to the wickedness o' the people, so there's not, although the Catechiz is against them—for, says it, 'there is but one Faith, one Church, an' one Baptism.' Now, sir, isn't it quare that people, wid sich words in the book afore them, won't be guided by it? I suppose they thought it only a *white* sin, sir, to take the milk, the thieves o' the world."

"Maybe, your honour," said another, "that it was only to keep the life in some poor sick crathur, that wanted it more nor you nor the farmers, that they did it. There's some o' the same farmers desarve worse, for they're keepin' up the prices o' their male an' praties upon the poor, an' did so all along, that they might make money by our outher distitution."

"That is no justification for theft," observed the graver of the two. "Does any one among you suspect those who committed it in this instance? If you do, I command you, as your bishop, to mention them."

"How, for instance," added the other, "were you able to supply this sick boy with whey during his illness?"

"Oh, thin, gintlemen," replied Connor, dexterously parrying the question, "but it's a mighty improvin' thing to see our own bishop—God spare his lordship to us!—an' the Protestant minister o' the

parish joinin' together to relieve an' give good advice to the poor! Bedad, it's settin' a fine example. so it is, to the quality, if they'd take patthern by it."

"Reply," said the bishop, rather sternly, "to the questions we have asked you."

"The quistions, your lordship? It's proud an' happy we'd be to do what you want; but the sarra man among us *can* do it, barrin' we'd say what we *ought not* to say. That's the truth, my lord; an' surely 'tisn't your gracious reverence that ud want us to go beyant it?"

"Certainly not," replied the bishop. "I warn you against both falsehood and fraud—two charges which might frequently be brought against you in your intercourse with the gentry of the country, whom you seldom scruple to deceive and mislead, by gliding into a character, when speaking to them, that is often the reverse of your real one; whilst, at the same time, you are both honest and sincere to persons of your class. Put away this practice, for it is both sinful and discreditable."

"God bless your lordship! an' many thanks to your gracious reverence for advisin' us! Well we know that it's the blessed thing to folly your words."

"Bring over that naked, starved-looking man, who is stirring the fire under that pot," said the rector—"he looks like famine itself."

"Paddy Dunn, will you come over here to his honour, Paddy! He's goin' to give you somethin'," said Connor, adding of his own accord the last clause of the message.

The tattered creature approached him with a gleam of expectation in his eyes that appeared like insanity.

"God bless your honour for your goodness!" exclaimed Paddy. "It's me that's in it, sir!—Paddy Dunn, sir, sure enough; but indeed I'm the next thing to my own ghost, sir, now—God help me!"

"What, and for whom, are you cooking?"

"Jist the smallest dhrop in life, sir, o' gruel, to keep the sowl in that lonely crathur, sir, the poor scholar."

"Pray how long is it since you have eaten anything yourself?"

The tears burst from the eyes of the miserable creature as he replied:

"Before God in glory, your honour, an' in presence of his lordship here, I only got about what ud make betther nor half a male widin the last day, sir. 'Twas a weeshy grain o' male that I got from a friend; an' as Ned Connor here tould me that this crathur had nothin' to make the gruel for him, why I shared it wid him, bekase he couldn't even beg it, sir, if he wanted it, an' him not able to walk yit."

The worthy pastor's eyes glistened with a moisture that did him honour. Without a word of observation he slipped a crown into the hand of Dunn, who looked at it as if he had been paralysed.

"Oh thin," said he, fervently, "may every hair on your honour's head become a mould-candle to light you into glory! The world's goodness is in your heart, sir; an' may all the blessins of heaven rain down upon you an' yours!"

The two gentlemen then gave assistance to the poor scholar, whom the bishop addressed in kind and encouraging language.

"Come to me, my good boy," he added, "and if, on further inquiry, I find that your conduct has been such as I believe it to have been, you may rest assured, provided also you *continue* worthy of my good opinion, that I shall be a friend and a protector to you. Call on me when you got well, and I will speak to you at greater length."

"Well," observed Connor, when they were gone, "the divil's own hard puzzle the bishop had me in, about stalin' the milk. It wint agin the grain wid me to tell *him* the lie, so I had to invint a bit o' truth to keep my conscience clear; for sure there was *not* a man among us that *could* tell him, barrin' we said what we *oughtn't* to say. Doesn't all the world know that a man oughtn't to condimn himself. That was *thruth*, anyway; but divil a scruple I'd have in *bammin'* the other—not but that he's one o' the best of his sort. Paddy Dunn, quit lookin' at that crown, but get the shovel an' give the boy his dhrink—he's wantin' it."

The agitation of spirits produced by Jemmy's cheering interview with the bishop was, for two or three days afterwards, somewhat prejudicial to his convalescence. In less than a week, however, he was comfortably settled with Mr. O'Rorke's family, whose kindness proved to him quite as warm as he had expected.

When he had remained with them a few days, he resolved to recommence his studies under his tyrant master. He certainly knew that his future attendance at the school would be penal to him, but he had always looked forward to the accomplishment of his hopes as a task of difficulty and distress. The severity to be expected from the master could not, he thought, be greater than that which he had already suffered; he therefore decided, if possible, to complete his education under him.

The school, when Jemmy appeared in it, had been for more than an hour assembled, but the thinness of the attendance not only proved the woeful prevalence of sickness and distress in the parish, but sharpened the pedagogue's vinegar aspect into an expression of countenance singularly peevish and gloomy. When the lad entered, a murmur of pleasure and welcome ran through the scholars, and joy beamed forth from every countenance but that of his teacher. When the latter noticed this, his irritability rose above restraint, and he exclaimed:

"Silence! and apply to business, or I shall cause some of you to denude immediately. No school ever can prosper in which that *hirudo*, called a poor scholar, is permitted toleration. I thought, sarra, I told you to nidificate, and hatch your wild project undher some other wing than mine."

"I only entrate you," replied our poor hero, "to suffer me to join the class I left while I was sick, for about another year. I'll be very quiet and humble, and, as far as I can, will do everything you wish me."

"Ah! you are a crawling reptile," replied the savage, "and, in my

opinion, nothing but a chate and impostor. I think you have imposed yourself on Mr. O'Brien for what you are not—that is, the son of an honest man. I have no doubt but many of your nearest relations died after having seen their own funerals. Your mother, you runagate, wasn't your father's wife, I'll be bail."

The spirit of the boy could bear this no longer; his eyes flashed, and his sinews stood out in the energy of deep indignation.

"It is false," he exclaimed, "it is as false as your own cruel and cowardly heart, you wicked and unprincipled tyrant! In everything you have said of my father, mother, and friends, and of myself, too, you are a liar, from the hat on your head to the dirt undher your feet—a liar, a coward, and a villain!"

The fury of the miscreant was ungovernable: he ran at the still feeble lad, and, by a stroke of his fist, dashed him senseless to the earth. There were now no large boys in the school to curb his resentment, he therefore kicked him in the back when he fell. Many voices exclaimed in alarm, "Oh! masther, sir, don't kill him! Oh! sir, dear, don't kill him! Don't kill poor Jemmy, sir, an' him still sick!"

"Kill him!" replied the master—"kill him, indeed! Faith, he'd be no common man who could kill him; he has as many lives in him as a cat! Sure he can live behind a ditch, wid the faver on his back, widout dying; and he would live if he was stuck on the spire of a steeple."

In the meantime the boy gave no symptoms of returning life, and the master, after desiring a few of the scholars to bring him out to the air, became pale as death with apprehension. He immediately withdrew to his private apartment, which joined the schoolroom, and sent out his wife to assist in restoring him to animation. With some difficulty this was accomplished. The unhappy boy at once remembered what had just occurred, and the bitter tears gushed from his eyes, as he knelt down and exclaimed, "Merciful Father of heaven and earth, have pity on me! You see my heart, great God! and what I did, I did for the best!"

"Avourneen," said the woman, "he's passionate, an' never mind him. Come in an' beg his pardon for callin' him a liar, an' I'll become spokesman for you myself. Come, acushla, an' I'll get lave for you to stay in the school still."

"Oh, I'm hurted!" said the poor youth—"I'm hurted inwardly—somewhere about the back and about my ribs!" The pain he felt brought the tears down his pale cheeks. "I wish I was at home!" said he. "I'll give up all and go home!" The lonely boy then laid his head upon his hands, as he sat on the ground, and indulged in a long burst of sorrow.

"Well," said a manly-looking little fellow, whilst the tears stood in his eyes, "I'll tell my father this, anyhow. I know he won't let me come to this school any more. Here, Jemmy, is a piece of my bread; maybe it will do you good."

"I couldn't taste it, Frank, dear," said Jemmy; "God bless you! but I couldn't taste it."

"Do," said Frank; "maybe it will bate back the pain."

"Don't ask me, Frank, dear," said Jemmy; "I couldn't ate it; I'm hurted inwardly."

"Bad luck to me!" exclaimed the indignant boy, "if ever my ten toes will darken this school door agin. By the livin' farmer, if they ax me at home to do it, I'll run away to my uncle's, so I will. Wait, Jemmy, I'll be big yet; an' be the blessed gospel that's about my neck, I'll give the same masther a shirtful of sore bones, the holy an' blessed minute I'm able to do it."

Many of the other boys declared that they would acquaint their friends with the master's cruelty to the poor scholar; but Jemmy requested them not to do so, and said that he was determined to return home the moment he should be able to travel.

The affrighted woman could not prevail upon him to seek a reconciliation with her husband, although the expressions of the other scholars induced her to press him to it, even to entreaty. Jemmy arose, and with considerable difficulty reached the curate's house, found him at home, and, with tears in his eyes, related to him the atrocious conduct of the master.

"Very well," said this excellent man, "I am glad that I can venture to ride as far as Colonel B——'s to-morrow. You must accompany me; for decidedly such brutality cannot be permitted to go unpunished."

Jemmy knew that the curate was his friend; and, although he would not himself have thought of summoning the master to answer for his barbarity, yet he acquiesced in the curate's opinion. He stopped that night in the house of the worthy man to whom Mr. O'Brien had recommended him on his first entering the town. It appeared in the morning, however, that he was unable to walk; the blows which he had received were *then* felt by him to be more dangerous than had been supposed. Mr. O'Brien, on being informed of this, procured a jaunting car, on which they both sat, and, at an easy pace, reached the colonel's residence.

The curate was shown into an ante-room, and Jemmy sat in the hall; the colonel joined the former in a few minutes. He had been in England and on the Continent, accompanied by his family, for nearly the last three years, but had just returned, in order to take possession of a large property in land and money, to which he succeeded at a very critical moment, for his own estates were heavily encumbered. He was now proprietor of an additional estate, the rent roll of which was six thousand per annum, and also master of eighty-five thousand pounds in the funds.

Mr. O'Brien, after congratulating him upon his good fortune, introduced the case of our hero as one which, in his opinion, called for the colonel's interposition as a magistrate.

"I have applied to you, sir," he proceeded, "rather than to any other of the neighbouring gentlemen, because I think this friendless lad has a peculiar claim upon any good offices you could render him."

"A claim upon me! how is that, Mr. O'Brien?"

"The boy, sir, is not a native of this province. His father was formerly a tenant of yours, a man, as I have reason to believe, remarkable for good conduct and industry. It appears that his circumstances, so long as he was your tenant, were those of a comfortable independent farmer. If the story which his son relates be true—and I, for one, believe it—his family have been dealt with in a manner unusually cruel, and iniquitous. Your present agent, colonel, who is known in his own neighbourhood by the nickname of *Yellow Sam*, thrust him out of his farm, when his wife was sick, for the purpose of putting into it a man who had married his illegitimate daughter. If this be found a correct account of the transaction, I have no hesitation in saying that you, Colonel B——, as a gentleman of honour and humanity, will investigate the conduct of your agent, and see justice done to an honest man who must have been oppressed in your name, and under colour of your authority."

"If my agent has dared to be unjust to a worthy tenant," said the colonel, "in order to provide for his bastard, by my sacred honour, he shall cease to be an agent of mine! I admit, certainly, that from some circumstances which transpired a few years ago I had reason to suspect his integrity. That, to be sure, was only so far as he and I were concerned; but, on the other hand, during one two visits I made to the estate which he manages, I heard the tenants thank and praise him with much gratitude, and all that sort of thing. There was 'Thank your honour;' 'Long may you reign over us, sir;' and 'Oh, colonel, you've a mighty good man to your agent;' and so forth. I do not think, Mr. O'Brien, that he has acted so harshly, or that he would dare to do it. Upon my honour, I heard those warm expressions of gratitude from the lips of the tenants themselves."

"If you knew the people in general, colonel, so well as I do," replied the curate, "you would admit that such expressions are often either cuttingly ironical or the result of fear. You will always find, sir, that the independent portion of the people have least of this forced dissimulation among them. A dishonest and inhuman agent has in his own hands the irresponsible power of harassing and oppressing the tenantry under him. The class most hateful to the people are those low wretches who spring up from nothing into wealth, accumulated by dishonesty and rapacity. They are proud, overbearing, and jealous, even to vindictiveness, of the least want of respect. It is to such upstarts that the poorer classes are externally most civil; but it is also such persons whom they most hate and abhor. They flatter them to their faces, 'tis true, even to *nausea*; but they seldom spare them in their absence. Of this very class, I believe, is your agent, Yellow Sam; so that any favourable expressions you may have heard from your tenantry towards him were, most probably, the result of dissimulation and fear. Besides, sir, here is a testimonial from M'Evoy's parish priest, in which his father is spoken of as an honest, moral, and industrious man."

"If what you say, Mr. O'Brien, be correct," observed the colonel, "you know the Irish peasantry much better than I do. Decidedly I have

always thought them, in conversation, exceedingly candid and sincere. With respect to testimonials from priests to landlords in behalf of their tenants, upon my honour I am sick of them. I actually received, about four years ago, such an excellent character of two tenants as induced me to suppose them worthy of encouragement. But what was the fact? Why, sir, they were two of the greatest firebrands on my estate, and put both me and my agent to great trouble and expense. No, sir, I wouldn't give a curse for a priest's testimonials upon such an occasion. These fellows were subsequently convicted of arson on the clearest evidence, and transported."

"Well, sir, I grant that you may have been misled in that instance. However, from what I have observed, the two great faults of Irish landlords are these:—In the first place, they suffer themselves to remain ignorant of their tenantry; so much so, indeed, that they frequently deny them access and redress when the poor people are anxious to acquaint them with their grievances; for it is usual with landlords to refer them to those very agents against whose cruelty and rapacity they are appealing. This is a *carte blanche* to the agent to trample upon them if he pleases. In the next place, Irish landlords too frequently employ ignorant and needy men to manage their estates; men who have no character, no property or standing in society, beyond the reputation of being keen, shrewd, and active. These persons, sir, make fortunes; and what means can they have of accumulating wealth except by cheating either the landlord or his tenants? A history of their conduct would be a black catalogue of dishonesty, oppression, and treachery. Respectable men, resident on or near the estate, possessing both character and property, should always be selected for this important trust. But, above all things, the curse of a tenantry is a *percentage* agent: he racks, and drives, and oppresses, without consideration either of market or produce, in order that his receipts may be ample, and his own income large."

"Why, O'Brien, you appear to be better acquainted with all this sort of thing than I, who am a landed proprietor."

"By-the-by, sir, without meaning you any disrespect, it is the landlords of Ireland who know least about the great mass of its inhabitants, and, I might also add, about its history, its literature, the manners of the people, their customs and their prejudices. The peasantry know this, and too often practise upon their ignorance. There is a landlord's *Vade mecum* sadly wanted in Ireland, colonel."

"Ah! very good, O'Brien—very good! Well, I shall certainly inquire into this case, and if I find that Yellow Sam has been playing the oppressor, out he goes. I am now able to manage him, which I could not readily do before, for, by-the-by, he had mortgages on my property."

"I would take it, colonel, as a personal favour if you would investigate the transaction I have mentioned."

"Undoubtedly I shall, and that very soon. But about this outrage committed against the boy himself? We had better take his informations, and punish the fellow"

"Certainly; I think that is the best way. His conduct to the poor youth has been merciless and detestable. We must put him out of this part of the country."

"Call the lad in. In this case I shall draw up the informations myself, although Gregg usually does that."

Jemmy, assisted by the curate, entered the room, and the humane colonel desired him, as he appeared ill, to sit down.

"What is your name?" asked the colonel

"James M'Evoy," he replied. "I'm the son, sir, of a man who was once a tenant of yours."

"Ay! and pray how did he cease to be a tenant of mine?"

"Why, sir, your agent, Yallow Sam, put him out of our farm, when my poor mother was on her sick-bed. He chated my father, sir, out of some money—part of our rent it was, that he didn't give him a receipt for. When my father went to him afterwards for the receipt, Yallow Sam abused him, and called him a rogue, and that, sir, was what no man ever called my father either before or since. My father, sir, threatened to tell you about it, and you came to the country soon after; but Yallow Sam got very great wid my father at that time, and sent him to sell bullocks for him about fifty miles off, but when he came back again you had left the country. Thin, sir, Yallow Sam said nothing till the next half-year's rent became due, whin he came down on my father for all—that is, what he hadn't got the receipt for, and the other gale, and without any warning in the world, put him out. My father offered to pay all, but he said he was a rogue, and that you had ordered him off the estate. In less than a week after this he put a man that married a bastard daughter of his own into our house and place. That's God's truth, sir, and you'll find it so, if you inquire into it. It's a common trick of his to keep back receipts, and make the tenants pay double."[1]

"Sacred heaven, O'Brien, can this be possible?"

"Your best way, colonel, is to inquire into it."

"Was not your father able to educate you at home, my boy?"

"No, sir; we soon got into poverty after we left your farm; and another thing, sir, there was no Latin school in our neighbourhood."

"For what purpose did you become a poor scholar?"

"Why, sir, I hoped one day or other to be able to raise my father and mother out of the distress that Yallow Sam brought on us."

"By heaven, a noble aim, and a noble sentiment. And what has this d——d fellow of a schoolmaster done to you?"

"Why, sir, yesterday, when I went back to the school, he abused me, and said that he supposed most of my relations were hanged—spoke ill of my father, and said that my mother"—here the tears started to his eyes—he sobbed aloud.

"Go on, and be cool," said the colonel; "what did he say of your mother?"

[1] This is fact. The individual here alluded to frequently kept back receipts when receiving rents, under pretence of hurry and afterwards compelled the tenants to pay the same gale twice!

"He said, sir, that she was never married to my father. I know I was wrong, sir—but if it was the king on his throne that said it of my mother, I'd call *him* a liar. I called him a liar, and a coward, and a villain. Ay, sir, and if I had been able, I would have trampled him under my feet."

The colonel looked steadily at him, but the open clear eye which the boy turned upon him was full of truth and independence.

"And you will find," said the soldier, "that this spirited defence of your mother will be the most fortunate action of your life. Well; he struck you then, did he?"

"He knocked me down, sir, with his fist—then kicked me in the back and sides. I think some of my ribs are broke."

"Ay!—no doubt, no doubt," said the colonel. "And you were only after recovering from this fever which is so prevalent?"

"I wasn't a week out of it, sir."

"Well, my boy, we shall punish him for you."

"Sir, would you hear me for a word or two, if it would be pleasing to you?"

"Speak on," said the colonel.

"I would rather change his punishment to—I would—that is—if it would be agreeable to you—it's this, sir—I wouldn't throuble you now against the master, if you'd be pleased to rightify my father, and punish Yallow Sam. Oh, sir, for God's sake, put my heartbroken father into his farm again! If you would, sir, I could shed my blood, or lay down my life for you, or for any belonging to you. I'm but a poor boy, sir, low and humble; but they say there's a greater Being than the greatest in this world, that listens to the just prayers of the poor and friendless. I was never happy, sir, since we left it—neither was any of us; and when we'd sit, cowld and hungry, about our hearth, we used to be talking of the pleasant days we spent in it, till the tears would be smothered in curses against him that put us out of it. Oh, sir, if you could know all that a poor and honest family suffers when they are thrown into distress by want of feeling in their landlords or by the dishonesty of agents, you would consider my father's case. I'm his favourite son, sir, and good right have I to speak for him. If you could know the sorrow, the misery, the drooping down of the spirits, that lies upon the countenances and the hearts of such people, you wouldn't, as a man and a Christian, think it below you to spread happiness and contentment among them again. In the morning they rise to a day of hardship, no matter how bright and cheerful it may be to others—nor is there any hope of a brighter day for *them;* and at night they go to their hard beds to strive to sleep away their hunger in spite of cowld and want. If you could see how the father of a family, after striving to bear up, sinks down at last; if you could see the look he gives at the childre that he would lay down his heart's blood for, when they sit naked and hungry about him; and the mother, too, with her kind word and sorrowful smile, proud of them in all their destitution, but her heart breaking silently all the time, her face wasting away, her eye dim, and her strength gone!—Sir, make one such family

happy—for all this has been in my father's house! Give us back our light spirits, our pleasant days, and our cheerful hearts again! We lost them through the villainy of your agent. Give them back to us, for you *can* do it; but you can *never* pay us for what we suffered. Give us, sir, our farm, our green fields, our house, and every spot and nook that we had before. We love the place, sir, for its own sake; it is the place of our fathers, and our hearts are in it. I often think I see the smooth river that runs through it, and the meadows that I played in when I was a child—the glen behind our house, the mountains that rose before us when we left the door, the thorn-bush at the garden, the hazels in the glen, the little bleach-green beside the river—oh, sir, don't blame me for crying, for they are all before my eyes, in my ears, and in my heart! Many a summer evening have I gone to the march-ditch of the farm that my father's now in, and looked at the place I loved till the tears blinded me, and I asked it as a favour of God to restore us to it! Sir, we are in great poverty at home; before God we are; and my father's heart is breaking!"

The colonel drew his breath deeply, rubbed his hands, and as he looked at the fine countenance of the boy—expressing, as it did, enthusiasm and sorrow—his eyes lightened with a gleam of indignation. It could not be against the poor scholar; no, gentle reader, but against his own agent.

"O'Brien," said he, "what do you think? And this noble boy is the son of a man who belongs to a class of which I am ignorant! By heaven, we landlords are, I fear, a guilty race."

"Not all, sir," replied the curate. "There are noble exceptions among them; their faults are more the faults of omission than commission."

"Well, well, no matter. Come, I will draw up the informations against this man; afterwards I have something to say to you, my boy," he added, addressing Jemmy, "that will not, I trust, be unpleasant."

He then drew up the informations as strongly as he could word them, after which Jemmy deposed to their truth and accuracy, and the colonel, rubbing his hands again, said:

"I will have the fellow secured. When you go into town, Mr. O'Brien, I'll thank you to call on Meares, and hand him these. He will lodge the miscreant in limbo this very night."

Jemmy then thanked him, and was about to withdraw, when the colonel desired him to remain a little longer.

"Now," said he, "your father has been treated inhumanly, I believe; but no matter. That is not the question. Your sentiments, and conduct, and your affection for your parents are noble, my boy. At present, I say, the question is not whether the history of your father's wrongs be true or false; you at least *believe* it to be true. From this forward—but by-the-by, I forgot; how could your becoming a poor scholar relieve your parents?"

"I intended to become a priest, sir, and then to help them."

"Ay! so I thought; and provided your father were restored to his farm, would you be still disposed to become a priest?"

"I would, sir; next to helping my father, that is what I wish to be."

"O'Brien, what would it cost to prepare him respectably for the priesthood? I mean, to defray his expenses until he completes his preparatory education, in the first place, and afterwards during his residence in Maynooth?"

"I think two hundred pounds, sir, would do it easily and respectably."

"I do not think it would. However, do you send him—but first let me ask what progress he has already made?"

"He has read—in fact he *is* nearly prepared to enter Maynooth. His progress has been very rapid."

"Put him to some respectable boarding-school for a year; then let him enter Maynooth, and I will bear the expense. But remember I do not adopt this course in consequence of his father's history. Not I, by Jupiter; I do it on his own account. He is a noble boy, and full of fine qualities, if they be not nipped by neglect and poverty. I loved my father myself, and fought a duel on his account; and I honour the son who has spirit to defend his absent parent."

"This is a most surprising turn in the boy's fortunes, colonel."

"He deserves it. A soldier, Mr. O'Brien, is not without his enthusiasm, nor can he help admiring it in others, when nobly and virtuously directed. To see a boy in the midst of poverty, encountering the hardships and difficulties of life, with the hope of raising up his parents from distress to independence, has a touch of sublimity in it."

"Ireland, colonel, abounds with instances of similar virtue, brought out, probably, into fuller life and vigour by the sad changes and depressions which are weighing down the people. In her glens, on her bleak mountain sides, and in her remotest plains, such examples of pure affection, uncommon energy, and humble heroism are to be seen; but, unfortunately, few persons of rank or observation mingle with the Irish people, and their many admirable qualities pass away without being recorded in the literature of their country. They are certainly a strange people, colonel, almost an anomaly in the history of the human race. They are the only people who can rush out from the very virtues of private life to the perpetration of crimes at which we shudder. There is, to be sure, an outcry about their oppression; but that is wrong. Their indigence and ignorance are rather the result of neglect—of neglect, sir, from the government of the country—from the earl to the squireen. They have been taught little that is suitable to their stations and duties in life, either as tenants who cultivate our lands, or as members of moral or Christian society."

"Well, well: I believe what you say is too true. But touching the records of virtue in humble life, pray who would record it when nothing goes down nowadays but what is either monstrous or fashionable."

"Very true, colonel; yet, in my humble opinion a virtuous Irish

peasant is far from being so low a character as a profligate man of rank."

"Well, well, well! Come, O'Brien, we will drop the subject. In the meantime, touching this boy, as I said, he must be looked to, for he has that in him which ought not to be neglected. We shall now see that this d——d pedagogue be punished for his cruelty."

The worthy colonel in a short time dismissed poor Jemmy with an exulting heart; but not until he had placed a sufficient sum in the curate's hands for enabling him to make a respectable appearance. Medical advice was also procured for him, by which he soon overcame the effects of his master's brutality.

On their way home Jemmy related to his friend the conversation which he had had with his bishop in the shed, and the kind interest which that gentleman had taken in his situation and prospects. Mr. O'Brien told him that the bishop was an excellent man possessing much discrimination and benevolence; "and so," said he, "is the Protestant clergyman who accompanied him. They have both gone among the people during this heavy visitation of disease and famine, administering advice and assistance; restraining them from those excesses which they sometimes commit, when, driven by hunger, they attack provision-carts, bakers' shops, or the houses of farmers who are known to possess a stock of meal or potatoes. God knows, it is an excusable kind of robbery; yet it is right to restrain them."

"It is a pleasant thing, sir, to see clergymen of every religion working together to make the people happy."

"It is certainly so," replied the curate; "and I am bound to say, in justice to the Protestant clergy, that there is no class of men in Ireland, James, who do *so much* good without distinction of creed or party. They are generally kind and charitable to the poor; so are their wives and daughters. I have often known them to cheer the sick-bed—to assist the widow and the orphan—to advise and admonish the profligate, and, in some instances, even to reclaim them. But now about your own prospects; I think you should go and see your family as soon as your health permits you."

"I would give my right hand," replied Jemmy, "just to see them, if it was only for five minutes: but I cannot go. I vowed that I would never enter my native parish until I should become a Catholic clergyman. I vowed that, sir, to God—and with his assistance I will keep my vow."

"Well," said the curate, "you are right. And now let me give you a little advice. In the first place, learn to speak as correctly as you can; lay aside the vulgarisms of conversation peculiar to the common people; and speak precisely as you would write. By-the-by, you acquitted yourself to admiration with the colonel. A little stumbling there was in the beginning; but you got over it. You see, James, the force of truth and simplicity. I could scarcely restrain my tears while you spoke."

"If I had not been in earnest, sir, I could never have spoken as I did."

"You never could. Truth, James, is the foundation of all eloquence; he who knowingly speaks what is not true may dazzle and perplex; but he will never touch with that power and pathos which spring from truth. Fiction is successful only by borrowing her habiliments. Now, James, for a little more advice. Don't let the idea of having been a poor scholar deprive you of self-respect; neither let your unexpected turn of fortune cause you to forget what you have suffered. Hold a middle course; be firm and independent; without servility on the one hand, or vanity on the other. You have also too much good sense, and, I hope, too much religion, to ascribe what this day has brought forth in your behalf to any other cause than God. It has pleased him to raise you from misery to ease and comfort; to him, therefore, be it referred, and to him be your thanks and prayers directed. You owe him much, for you now can perceive the value of what he has done for you! May his name be blessed!"

Jemmy was deeply affected by the kindness of his friend, for such, in friendship's truest sense, was he to him. He expressed the obligations which he owed him, and promised to follow the excellent advice he had just received.

The schoolmaster's conduct to the poor scholar had, before the close of the day on which it occurred, been known through the parish. Thady O'Rorke, who had just recovered from the epidemic, felt so bitterly exasperated at the outrage that he brought his father to the parish priest, to whom he gave a detailed account of all that our hero and the poorer children of the school had suffered. In addition to this, he went among the more substantial farmers of the neighbourhood, whose co-operation he succeeded in obtaining, for the laudable purpose of driving the tyrant out of the parish.

Jemmy, who still lived at the "House of Entertainment," on hearing what they intended to do, begged Mr. O'Brien to allow him, provided the master should be removed from the school, to decline prosecuting him.

"He has been cruel to me, no doubt," he added; "still I cannot forget that his cruelty has been the means of changing my condition in life so much for the better. If he is put out of the parish it will be punishment enough; and, to say the truth, sir, I can *now* forgive everybody. Maybe, had I been still *neglected* I might punish him; but, in the meantime, to show him and the world that I didn't deserve his severity, I forgive him."

Mr. O'Brien was not disposed to check a sentiment that did the boy's heart so much honour; he waited on the colonel the next morning, acquainted him with Jemmy's wishes, and the indictment was quashed immediately after the schoolmaster's removal from his situation.

Our hero's personal appearance was by this time incredibly changed for the better. His countenance, naturally expressive of feeling, firmness, and intellect, now appeared to additional advantage; so did his whole person, when dressed in a decent suit of black. No man acquainted with life can be ignorant of the improvement which genteel

apparel produces in the carriage, tone of thought, and principles of an individual. It gives a man confidence, self-respect, and a sense of equality with his companions ; it inspires him with energy, independence, delicacy of sentiment, courtesy of manner, and elevation of language. The face becomes manly, bold, and free ; the brow open, and the eye clear ; there is no slinking through narrow lanes and back streets : but, on the contrary, the smoothly-dressed man steps out with a determination not to spare the earth, or to walk as if he trod on eggs or razors. No ; he brushes onward ; is the first to accost his friends ; gives a careless bow to this, a bluff nod to that, and a patronising "how d'ye do" to a third, who is worse dressed than himself. Trust me, kind reader, that good clothes are calculated to advance a man in life nearly as well as good principles, especially in a world like this, where external appearance is taken as the exponent of what is beneath it.

Jemmy, by the advice of his friend, now waited upon the bishop, who was much surprised at the uncommon turn of fortune which had taken place in his favour. He also expressed his willingness to help him forward, as far as lay in his power, towards the attainment of his wishes. In order to place the boy directly under suitable patronage, Mr. O'Brien suggested that the choice of the school should be left to the bishop. This, perhaps, flattered him a little, for who is without his weaknesses? A school near the metropolis was accordingly fixed upon, to which Jemmy, now furnished with a handsome outfit, was accordingly sent. There we will leave him, reading with eagerness and assiduity, whilst we return to look after Colonel B. and his agent.

One morning after James's departure, the colonel's servant waited upon Mr. O'Brien with a note from his master, intimating a wish to see him. He lost no time in waiting upon that gentleman, who was then preparing to visit the estate which he had so long neglected.

"I am going," said he, "to see how my agent, Yellow Sam, as they call him, and my tenants agree. It is my determination, Mr. O'Brien, to investigate the circumstances attending the removal of our *protégé's* father. I shall, moreover, look closely into the state and feelings of my tenants in general. It is probable I shall visit many of them, and certain that I will inquire into the character of this man."

"It is better late than never, colonel ; but still, though I am a friend to the people, yet I would recommend you to be guided by great caution, and the evidence of respectable and disinterested men only. You must not certainly entertain all the complaints you may hear without clear proof, for I regret to say that too many of the idle and political portion of the peasantry are apt to throw the blame of their own folly and ignorance—yes, and of their crimes, also—upon those who in no way have occasioned either their poverty or their wickedness. They are frequently apt to consider themselves oppressed, if concessions are not made to which they, as idle and indolent men, who neglect their own business, have no fair claim. Bear this in mind, colonel—be cool, use discrimination, take your proofs from

others besides the parties concerned, or their friends, and, depend upon it, you will arrive at the truth."

"O'Brien, you would make an excellent agent."

"I have studied the people, sir, and know them. I have breathed the atmosphere of their prejudices, habits, manners, customs, and superstitions. I have felt them all myself, as they feel them; but I trust I have got above their influence where it is evil, for there are many fine touches of character among them which I should not willingly part with. No, sir, I should make a bad agent, having no capacity for transacting business. I could direct and overlook, but nothing more."

"Well, then, I shall set out to-morrow; and in the meantime, permit me to say that I am deeply sensible of your kindness in pointing out my duty as an Irish landlord, conscious that I have too long neglected it."

"Kindness, colonel, is the way to the Irish heart. There is but one man in Ireland who can make an Irishman ungrateful, and that is his priest. I regret that in times of political excitement, and especially during electioneering struggles, the interference of the clergy produces disastrous effects upon the moral feelings of the people. When a tenant meets the landlord whom he has deserted in the critical moment of the contest—the landlord to whom he has solemnly promised his support, and who, perhaps, as a member of the legislature, has advocated his claims and his rights, and who, probably, has been kind and indulgent to him—I say, when he meets him afterwards, his shufflings, excuses, and evasions are grievous. He is driven to falsehood and dissimulation in explaining his conduct; he expresses his repentance, curses himself for his ingratitude, promises well for the future, but seldom or never can be prevailed upon to state candidly that he acted in obedience to the priest. In some instances, however, he admits this, and inveighs bitterly against his interference—but this is only whilst in the presence of his landlord. I think, colonel, that no clergyman, set apart as he is for the concerns of a better world, should become a firebrand in the secular pursuits and turmoils of this."

"I wish, Mr. O'Brien, that every clergyman of your Church resembled you, and acted up to your sentiments: our common country would be the better for it."

"I endeavour to act, sir, as a man who has purely spiritual duties to perform. It is not for us to be agitated and inflamed by the political passions and animosities of the world. Our lot is differently cast, and we ought to abide by it. The priest and politician can no more agree than good and evil. I speak with respect to *all* Churches."

"And so do I."

"What stay do you intend to make, colonel?"

"I think about a month. I shall visit some of my old friends there, from whom I expect a history of the state and feelings of the country."

"You will hear both sides of the question before you act?"

"Certainly. I have written to my agent to say that I shall look very closely into my own affairs on *this* occasion. I thought it fair to give him notice."

"Well, sir, I wish you all success."

"Farewell, Mr. O'Brien; I shall see you immediately after my return."

The colonel performed his journey by slow stages until he reached "the hall of his fathers"—for it was such, although he had not for years resided in it. It presented the wreck of a fine old mansion, situated within a crescent of stately beeches, whose moss-covered and ragged trunks gave symptoms of decay and neglect. The lawn had been once beautiful, and the demesne a noble one; but that which blights the industry of the tenant—the curse of absenteeism—had also left the marks of ruin stamped upon every object around him. The lawn was little better than a common; the pond was thick with weeds and sluggish water-plants, that almost covered its surface; and a light, elegant bridge, that spanned a river which ran before the house, was also moss-grown and dilapidated. The hedges were mixed up with briers, the gates broken or altogether removed, the fields were rank with the ruinous luxuriance of weeds, and the grass-grown avenues spoke of solitude and desertion. The still appearance, too, of the house itself, and the absence of smoke from its time-tinged chimneys—all told a tale which constitutes one, perhaps the *greatest*, portion of Ireland's misery! Even then he did not approach it with the intention of residing there during his sojourn in the country. It was not habitable, nor had it been so for years. The road by which he travelled lay near it, and he could not pass without looking upon the place where a long line of gallant ancestors had succeeded each other, lived their span, and disappeared in their turn.

He contemplated it for some time in a kind of reverie. There it stood, sombre and silent; its grey walls mouldering away—its windows dark and broken; like a man forsaken by the world, compelled to bear the storms of life without the hand of a friend to support him, though age and decay render him less capable of enduring them. For a moment fancy repeopled it: again the stir of life, pastime, mirth, and hospitality echoed within its walls; the train of his long-departed relatives returned; the din of rude and boisterous enjoyment peculiar to the times; the cheerful tumult of the hall at dinner; the family feuds and festivities; the vanities and the passions of those who now slept in dust; all—all came before him once more, and played their part in the vision of the moment!

As he walked on, the flitting wing of a bat struck him lightly in its flight; he awoke from the remembrances which crowded on him, and, resuming his journey, soon arrived at the inn of the nearest town, where he stopped that night. The next morning he saw his agent for a short time, but declined entering on business. For a few days more he visited most of the neighbouring gentry, from whom he received sufficient information to satisfy him that neither himself nor his agent

was popular among his tenantry. Many flying reports of the agent's dishonesty and tyranny were mentioned to him, and in every instance he took down the names of the parties, in order to ascertain the truth. M'Evoy's case had occurred more than ten years before, but he found that the remembrance of the poor man's injury was strongly and bitterly retained in the recollections of the people—a circumstance which extorted from the blunt, but somewhat sentimental soldier, a just observation. "I think," said he, "that there are no people in the world who remember an injury or a kindness so long as the Irish."

When the tenants were apprised of his presence among them, they experienced no particular feeling upon the subject. During all his former visits to his estate he appeared merely the creature and puppet of his agent, who never acted the bully, nor tricked himself out in his brief authority more imperiously than he did before him. The knowledge of this damped them, and rendered any expectations of redress or justice from the landlord a matter not to be thought of.

"If he wasn't so great a man," they observed, "who thinks it below him to speak to his tenants, or hear their complaints, there ud be some hope. But that rip of hell, Yallow Sam, can wind him round his finger like a thread, an' does too. There's no use in thinkin' to petition him, or to lodge a complaint against Stony Heart, for the first thing he'd do ud be to put it into yallow boy's hands, an' thin, God be merciful to thim that ud complain. No, no; the best way is to wait till Sam's masther[1] takes him; an' who knows but that ud be sooner nor we think."

"They say," another would reply, "that the colonel is a good gintleman for all that, an' that if he could *once* know the truth, he'd pitch the 'yallow boy' to the 'ould boy.'"

No sooner was it known by his tenantry that the head landlord was disposed to redress their grievances and hear their complaints, than the smothered attachment, which long neglect had nearly extinguished, now burst forth with uncommon power.

"Augh? by this an' by that, the thrue blood's in him still. The rale gintleman to dale wid for ever! We knew he only wanted to come at the thruth, an' thin he'd back us agin the villain that harrished us! To the divil wid skamin' upstarts, that hasn't the ould blood in thim! What are they but sconces an' chates, every one o' thim, barrin' an odd one, for a wondher?"

The colonel's estate now presented a scene of gladness and bustle. Every person who felt in the slightest degree aggrieved got his petition drawn up; and, but that we fear our sketch is already too long, we would gratify the reader's curiosity by submitting a few of them. It is sufficient to say that they came to him in every shape—in all the variety of diction that the poor English language admits of—in the schoolmaster's best copy-hand, and choicest sesquipedalianism of pedantry—in the severer but more scriptural terms of the parish clerk—in the engrossing hand and legal phrase of the attorney's—in the

[1] The devil—a familiar name for him when mentioned in connection with a villain.

military form, evidently redolent of the shrewd old pensioner—and in the classical style of the young priest; for each and all of the foregoing were enlisted in the cause of those who had petitions to send in "to the colonel himself, God bless him!"

Early in the morning of the day on which the colonel had resolved to compare the complaints of his tenantry with the character which his agent gave him of the complainants, he sent for the former, and the following dialogue took place between them.

"Good morning, Mr. Carson. Excuse me for requesting your presence to-day earlier than usual. I have taken it into my head to know something of my own tenantry, and as they have pestered me with petitions and letters and complaints, I am anxious to have your opinion, as you know them better than I do."

"Before we enter on business, colonel, allow me to inquire if you feel relieved of that bilious attack you complained of the day before yesterday? I'm of a bilious habit myself, and know something about the management of digestion."

"A good digestion is an excellent thing, Carson. As for me, I drank too much claret with my friend B——y; and there's the secret. I don't like cold wines; they never agree with me."

"Nor do I; they are not constitutional. Your father was celebrated for his wines, colonel: I remember an anecdote told me by Captain Ferguson—by-the-by, do you know where Ferguson could be found now, sir?"

"Not I. What wines do *you* drink, Carson?"

"A couple of glasses of sherry, sir, at dinner; and about ten o'clock, a glass of brandy and water."

"Carson, you are sober and *prudent*. Well, about these cursed petitions; you must help me to dispose of them. Why, a man would think, by the tenor of them, that these tenants of mine are ground to dust by a tyrant."

"Ah, colonel, you know little about these fellows. They would make black white. Go and take a ride, sir, return about four o'clock, and I will have everything as it ought to be."

"I wish to heaven, Carson, I had your talents for business. Do you think my tenants attached to me?"

"Attached, sir! they are ready to cut your throat or mine on the first convenient opportunity. You could not conceive their knavishness and dishonesty, except you happened to be an agent for a few years."

"So I have been told, and I am resolved to remove every dishonest tenant from my estate. Is there not a man, for instance, called Brady? He has sent me a long-winded petition here. What do you think of him?"

"Show me the petition, colonel."

"I cannot lay my hand on it just now; but you shall see it. In the meantime, what's your opinion of the fellow?"

"Brady! Why, I know the man particularly well. He is one of my favourites. What the deuce could the fellow petition about, though? I promised the other day to renew his lease for him."

"Oh, then, if he be a favourite of yours, his petition may go to the devil, I suppose? Is the man honest?"

"Remarkably so; and has paid his rents very punctually. He is one of our safest tenants."

"Do you know a man called Cullen?"

"The most litigious scoundrel on the estate."

"Indeed! Oh, then, we must look into the merits of *his* petition, as he is *not* honest. Had he been honest like Brady, Carson, I should have dismissed it."

"Cullen, sir, is a dangerous fellow. Do you know, that rascal has charged me with keeping back his receipts, and with making him pay double rent!—ha, ha, ha! Upon my honour, it's fact."

"The scoundrel! We shall sift him to some purpose, however."

"If you take my advice, sir, you will send him about his business: for if it be once known that you listen to malicious petitions, my authority over such villains as Cullen is lost."

"Well, I set him aside for the present. Here's a long list of others, all of whom have been oppressed, forsooth. Is there a man called M'Evoy on my estate?—Dominick M'Evoy, I think."

"M'Evoy! Why, that rascal, sir, has not been your tenant for ten years! *His* petition, colonel, is a key to the nature of their grievances in general."

"I believe you, Carson—most implicitly do I *believe* that. Well, about this rascal?"

"Why, it is so long since, that, upon my honour, I cannot exactly remember the circumstances of his misconduct. He ran away."

"Who is in his farm now, Carson?"

"A very decent man, sir. One Jackson, an exceedingly worthy, honest, industrious fellow. I take some credit to myself for bringing Jackson on your estate."

"Is Jackson married? Has he a family?"

"Married! Let me see! Why—yes—I *believe* he is. Oh, by-the-by, now I think of it, he *is* married, and to a very respectable woman, too. Certainly, I remember—she usually accompanies him when he pays his rents."

"Then your system must be a good one, Carson; you weed out the idle and profligate, to replace them by the honest and industrious?"

"Precisely so, sir; that is my system."

"Yet there are agents who invert your system in some cases; who drive out the honest and industrious, and encourage the idle and profligate; who connive at them, Carson, and fill the estates they manage with their own dependents or relatives, as the case may be. You have been always opposed to this, and I'm glad to hear it."

"No man, Colonel B——, filling the situation which I have the honour to hold under you, could study your interests with greater zeal and assiduity. God knows, I have had so many quarrels, and feuds, and wranglings, with these fellows, in order to squeeze money out of them to meet your difficulties, that, upon my honour, I think if it required five dozen oaths to hang me, they could be procured upon

your estate. An agent, colonel, who is faithful to the landlord, is seldom popular with the tenants."

"I can't exactly see that, Carson; and I have known an unpopular landlord rendered highly popular by the judicious management of an enlightened and honest agent, who took no bribes, Carson, and who neither extorted from nor ground the tenantry under him—something like a counterpart of yourself. But you may be right in general."

"Is there anything particular, colonel, in which I can assist you now?"

"Not now. I was anxious to hear the character of those fellows from you, who know them. Come down about eleven or twelve o'clock; these petitioners will be assembled, and you may be able to assist me."

"Colonel, remember I forewarn you that you are plunging into a mesh of difficulties which you will never be able to disentangle. Leave the fellows to me, sir; I know how to deal with them. Besides, upon my honour, you are not equal to it in point of health. You look ill. Pray allow me to take home their papers, and I shall have all clear and satisfactory before two o'clock. They know my method, sir."

"They do, Carson, they *do*; but I am anxious they should also know *mine*. Besides, it will amuse me, for I want excitement. Good day, for the present; you will be down about twelve, or one at the farthest."

"Certainly, sir. Good morning, colonel."

The agent was too shrewd a man not to perceive that there were touches of cutting irony in some of the colonel's expressions, which he did not like. There was a dryness, too, in the tone of his voice and words, blended with a copiousness of good humour, which, taken altogether, caused him to feel uncomfortable. He could have wished the colonel at the devil; yet had the said colonel never been more familiar in his life, nor, with one or two exceptions, readier to agree with almost every observation made to him.

"Well," thought he, "*he* may act as he pleases; *I* have feathered my nest, at all events, and disregard him."

Colonel B——, in fact, ascertained, with extreme regret, that something was necessary to be done to secure the good-will of his tenants; that the conduct of his agent had been marked by rapacity and bribery almost incredible. He had exacted from the tenantry in general the performance of duty-labour to such an extent that his immense agricultural farms were managed with little expense to himself. If a poor man's corn were drop ripe, or his hay in a precarious state, or his turf undrawn, he must suffer his oats, hay, and turf to be lost, in order to secure the crops of the agent. If he had spirit to refuse, he must expect to become a martyr to his resentment. In renewing leases his extortions were exorbitant; ten, thirty, forty, and fifty guineas he claimed as a fee for his favour, according to the ability of the party; yet this was quite distinct from the renewal fine, and went into his own pocket. When such "glove money" was not to be had, he would accept a cow or horse, to which he usually made a point to take a fancy; or he wanted to purchase a firkin of butter at that particular

time, and the poor people usually made every sacrifice to avoid his vengeance. It is due to Colonel B—— to say that he acted in the investigation of his agent's conduct with the strictest honour and impartiality. He scrutinized every statement thoroughly, pleaded for him as temperately as he could; found, or pretended to find, extenuating motives for his most indefensible proceedings; but all would not do. The cases were so clear and evident against him, even in the opinion of the neighbouring gentry, who had been for years looking upon the system of selfish misrule which he practised, that at length the generous colonel's blood boiled with indignation in his veins at the contemplation of his villainy. He accused himself bitterly for neglecting his duties as a landlord, and felt both remorse and shame for having wasted his time, health, and money in the fashionable dissipation of London and Paris whilst a cunning, unprincipled upstart played the vampire with his tenants, and turned his estate into a scene of oppression and poverty. Nor was this all: he had been endeavouring to bring the property more and more into his own clutches, a point which he would ultimately have gained had not the colonel's late succession to so large a fortune enabled him to meet his claims.

At one o'clock the tenants were all assembled about the inn door, where the colonel had resolved to hold his little court. The agent himself soon arrived, as did several other gentlemen, the colonel's friends, who knew the people, and could speak to their character.

The first man called was Dominick M'Evoy. No sooner was his name uttered than a mild, poor-looking man, rather advanced in years, came forward.

"I beg your pardon, colonel," said Carson, "here is some mistake; this man is not one of your tenants. You may remember I told you so this morning."

"I remember it," replied the colonel; "this is 'the rascal' you spoke of—is he not? M'Evoy," the colonel proceeded, "you will reply to my questions with strict truth. You will state nothing but what has occurred between you and my agent; you must not even turn a circumstance in your own favour, nor against Mr. Carson, by either adding to, or taking away from it, more or less than the truth. I say this to you and to all present; for, upon my honour, I shall dismiss the first case in which I discover a falsehood."

"Wid the help o' the Almighty, sir, I'll state nothing but the bare thruth?"

"How long are you off my estate?"

"Ten years, your honour, or a little more."

"How came you to run away out of your farm?"

"Run away, your honour? God he knows I didn't run away, sir. The whole counthry knows that."

"Yes, run away! Mr. Carson, here, stated to me this morning that you ran away. He is a gentleman of integrity, and would not state a falsehood."

"I beg your pardon, colonel, not positively. I told you I did not exactly remember the circumstances; I said I thought so; but I may

be wrong, for, indeed, my memory of facts is not good. M'Evoy, however, is a very *honest man*, and I have no doubt will state everything as it happened, fairly and without malice."

"An honest '*rascal*,' I suppose you mean, Mr. Carson," said the colonel, bitterly. "Proceed, M'Evoy."

M'Evoy stated the circumstances precisely as the reader is already acquainted with them, after which the colonel turned round to his agent, and asked what he had to say in reply.

"You cannot expect, Colonel B——," he replied, "that with such a multiplicity of business on my hands I could remember, after a lapse of ten years, the precise state of this particular case. Perhaps I may have some papers, a memorandum or so, at home, that may throw light upon it. At present I can only say that the man failed in his rents, I ejected him, and put a better tenant in his place. I cannot see a crime in that."

"Plase your honour," replied M'Evoy, "I can prove by them that's standin' to the fore this minute, as well as by this written affidavit, sir, that I offered him the full rint, havin', at the same time, as God is my judge, ped part of it afore."

"That is certainly false—an untrue and malicious statement," said Carson. "I now remember that the cause of my resentment—yes, of my just resentment against you, was your reporting that I received your rent and withheld your receipt."

"Then," observed the colonel, "there has been *more than one* charge of that nature brought against you? You mentioned *another* to me this morning, if I mistake not."

"I have made my oath, your honour, of the thruth of it; an' here is a dacent man, sir, a Protestant, that lent me the money, an' was present when I offered it to him. Mr. Smith, come forrid, sir, an' spake up for the poor man, as you're always willin' to do."

"I object to *his* evidence," said Carson: "he is my open enemy."

"I am your enemy, Mr. Carson, or, rather, the enemy of your corruption and want of honesty," said Smith; "but, as you say, an *open* one. I scorn to say behind your back what I wouldn't say to your face. Right well you know I was present when he tendered you his rent. I lent him part of it. But why did you and your bailiffs turn him out when his wife was on her sick bed? Allowing that he could not pay his rent, was that any reason you should do so barbarous an act as to drag a woman from her sick bed, and she at the point of death? But we know your reasons for it."

"Gentlemen," said the colonel, "pray what character do M'Evoy and Smith here bear in the country?"

"We have known them both for years to be honest, conscientious men," said those whom he addressed: "such is their character, and in our opinion they well deserve it."

"God bless you, gintlemen!" said M'Evoy—"God bless your honours for your kind words! I'm sure, for my own part, I hope I'll always desarve your good opinion, although but a poor man *now*, God help me!"

"Pray, who occupies the farm at present, Mr. Carson?"

"The man I mentioned to you this morning, sir? His name is Jackson?"

"And pray, Mr. Carson, who is his wife?"

"Oh, by-the-by, colonel, that's a little too close. I see the gentlemen smile; but they know I must beg to decline answering that question—not that it matters much. We have all sown our wild oats in our time—myself as well as another—ha, ha, ha!"

"The fact, under other circumstances," observed the colonel, "could never draw an inquiry from me; but as it is connected with, or probably has occasioned, a gross, unfeeling, and an unjust act of oppression towards an honest man, I therefore alluded to it, as exhibiting the motives from which you acted. She is your illegitimate daughter, sir?"

"She's one o' the baker's dozen o' them, plase your honour," observed a humorous little Presbyterian, with a sarcastic face, and sharp northern accent—"for feth, sir, for my part, A thenk he hes one on every hill-head. A'll count, your honour, on my fingers, a roun' half-dozen, aall on your estate, sir, featherin' their nests as fast as they can."

"Is this Jackson a good tenant, Mr. Carson?"

"I gave you his character this morning, Colonel R——."

"Hout, colonel," said the Presbyterian, "deil a penny rent the man pays, at aal at aal. A'll swear A hev it from Jackson's own lips. He made him a bailey, sir; he suts rent free. Ask the man, sir, for his receipts, an' A'll warrant the truth will come out."

"I have secured Jackson's attendance," said the colonel; "let him be called in."

The man in a few minutes entered.

"Jackson," said the colonel, "how long is it since you paid Mr. Carson here any rent?"

Jackson looked at Carson for his cue; but the colonel rose up indignantly. "Fellow!" he proceeded, "if you tamper with me a single moment, you shall find Mr. Carson badly able to protect you. If you speak falsehood, be it at your peril."

"By jing, sir," said Jackson, "A'll say nothin' aginst my father-in-laa, an' A don't care who teks it well or ull. A was jist tekin' a *gun*[1] with a fren' or two—an' d—— me, A say, A'll stick to my father-in-laa, for he hes stuck to me."

"You appear to be a hardened, drunken wretch," observed the colonel. "Will you be civil enough to show your last receipt for rent?"

"Wull A show it? A dono whether A wull or not, nor A dono whether A hev it or not; but ef aal the receipts in Europe wur burnt, d—— my blood but A'll stick to my father-in-laa."

"Your father-in-law may be proud of you," said the colonel.

"By h——, A'll back you en that," said the fellow, nodding his head, and looking round him confidently. "By h——, A say that, too!"

[1] A half-lumbler of punch.

"And I'm sorry to be compelled to add," continued the colonel, "that you may be equally proud of your father-in-law."

"A say right agane! D—— me, bit A'll back that too!" and he nodded confidently, and looked around the room once more. "A wull; d—— my blood, bit no man can say agane it. A'm married to his daughther; an', by the sun that shines, A'll still stan' up for my father-in-laa."

"Mr. Carson," said the colonel, "can you disprove these facts? Can you show that you did not expel M'Evoy from his farm, and put the husband of your illegitimate daughter into it? That you did not receive his rent, decline giving him a receipt, and afterwards compel him to pay twice, because he could not produce the receipt which you withheld?"

"Gentlemen," said Carson, not directly replying to the colonel, "there is a base conspiracy got up against me; and I can perceive, moreover, that there is evidently some unaccountable intention on the part of Colonel B—— to insult my feelings and injure my character. When paltry circumstances that have occurred above ten years ago are raked up in my teeth, I have little to say but that it proves how very badly off the colonel must have been for an imputation against my conduct and discretion as his agent, since he finds himself compelled to hunt so far back for a charge."

"That is by no means the heaviest charge I have to bring against you," replied the colonel. "There is no lack of them; nor shall you be able to complain that they are not *recent*, as well as of longer standing. Your conduct in the case of poor honest M'Evoy here is black and iniquitous. He must be restored to his farm, but by other hands than yours, and that ruffian instantly expelled from it. From this moment, sir, you cease to be my agent. You have betrayed the confidence I reposed in you; you have misled me as to the character of my tenants; you have been a deceitful, cringing, cunning, selfish, and rapacious tyrant. My people you have ground to dust; my property you have lessened in value nearly one-half, and for your motives in doing this, I refer you to certain transactions and legal documents which passed between us. There is nothing cruel or mercenary which you did not practise in order to enrich yourself. The whole tenor of your conduct is before me. Your profligacy is not only discovered, but already proved; and you played those villainous pranks, I suppose, because I have been mostly an absentee. Do not think, however, that you shall enjoy the fruits of your extortion? I will place the circumstances, and the proofs of the respective charges against you, in the hands of my solicitor, and, by the sacred heaven above me, you shall disgorge the fruits of your rapacity! My good people, I shall remain among you for another fortnight, during which time I intend to go through my estate, and set everything to rights as well as I can, until I may appoint a humane and feeling *gentleman* as my agent—such a one as will have, at least, a *character* to lose. I also take this opportunity of informing you that in future I shall visit you often, will redress your grievances, should

you have any to complain of, and will give such assistance to the honest and industrious among you—but to *them only*—as I trust may make us better pleased with each other than we have been. Do not you go, M'Evoy, until I speak to you."

During these observations Carson sat with a smile, or rather a sneer, upon his lips. It was the sneer of a purse-proud villain, confident that his wealth, no matter how ill-gotten, was still wealth, and worth its value.

"Colonel," said he, "I have heard all you said, but you see me 'so strong in honesty' that I am not moved. In the course of a few weeks I shall have purchased an estate of my own, *which I will manage differently*, for my fortune is made, sir. I intend also to give up my other agencies: I am rather old, and must retire to enjoy a little of the *otium cum dignitate*. I wish you all good morning!"

The colonel turned away in abhorrence, but disdained any reply.

"A say, Sam," said the Presbyterian, "bring your son-in-laa wuth you."

"An' A say that too," exclaimed the drunken ruffian—"A say that, A do. A'm married to his daughther; an' A say stull that, d——n my blood, bit A'll stick to my father-in-laa! That's the point!"—and again he nodded his head, and looked round him with a drunken swagger. "A'll stick to my father-in-laa! A'll do that; feth, A wull!"[1]

It is scarcely necessary to inform the reader that the colonel's address to Carson soon got among the assembled tenantry, and a vehement volley of groans and hisses followed the discarded agent up the street.

"Ha! bad luck to you for an ould villain! You were made to hear on the deaf side o' your head at last! You may take the black wool out o' your ears now, you rip! The cries an' curses o' the widows an' orphans that you made and oppressed has ris up agin you at the long run! Ha! you beggarly nager! maybe you'll make us neglect our own work to do yours agin! Go an' gather the dhry cow-cakes, you misert, an' bring them home in your pocket, to throw on the dunghill!"

"Do you remimber the day," said others, "you met Mr. M——, an' you goin' up the street wid a cake of it in your fists, undher your shabby skirts; an' whin the gintleman wint to shake hands wid you, how he discovered your maneness? Three groans for Yallow Sam, the extortioner! A short coorse to him! Your corner's warm below for you, you villain!"

"But now, boys, for the colonel!" they exclaimed. "Huzza for noble Colonel B——, the rale Irish gintleman, that wouldn't see his tenants put upon by a villain!—Huzza! Hell resave yees, shout! Huzza! Huzza! Huzza! Huz—— tundher-an'-ounze, my voice is cracked! Where's his coach?—where's his honour's coach? Come, boys, out wid it!—out wid it! Tattheration to yees, come! We'll

[1] This dialect is local.

dhraw it to the divil, to hell an' back agin, if it plases him! Success to Colonel B——! Blood-an-turf! what'll we do for a fight? Long life to noble Colonel B——, the poor man's friend!—long life to him for ever, an' a day longer! Whoo! my darlins! Huzza!" &c.

The warm interest which the colonel took in M'Evoy's behalf was looked upon by the other tenants as a guarantee of his sincerity in all he promised. Their enthusiasm knew no bounds. They got out his carriage from the inn-yard, and drew it through the town, though the colonel himself, beyond the fact of their shouting, remained quite ignorant of what was going forward.

After Carson's departure, the colonel's friends, having been first asked to dine with him at the inn, also took their leave, and none remained but M'Evoy, who waited with pleasing anxiety to hear what the colonel proposed to say—for he felt certain that it would be agreeable.

"M'Evoy," said the colonel, "I am truly sorry for what you have suffered through the villainy of my agent; but I will give you redress, and allow you for what you have lost by the transaction. It is true, as I have been lately told by a person who pleaded your cause nobly and eloquently, that I can never repay you for what you have suffered. However, what we can, we will do. You are poor, I understand?"

"God he sees that, sir; and afflicted, too, plase your honour."

"Afflicted! How is that?"

"I had a son, sir—a blessed boy! a darlin' boy!—once our comfort, an' once we thought he'd be our pride an' our staff, but ——"

The poor man's tears here flowed fast; he took up the skirt of his "Cotha More," or great coat, and after wiping his eyes, and clearing his voice, proceeded:—

"He was always, as I said, a blessed boy, and we looked up to him always, sir. He saw our poverty, your honour, an' he felt it, sir, keen enough, indeed, God help him! How-an'-ever, he took it on him to go up to Munster, sir, undher hopes of risin' us—undher the hopes, poor child—an' God knows, sir—if—oh, Jemmy, avourneen machree!—I doubt—I doubt you sunk undher what proved too many for you! I doubt my child's dead, sir—him that all our hearts wor fixed upon; and if that ud happen to be the case, nothin', sir,—oh, nothin'—not even your kindness in doin' us justice, could make us happy. We would rather beg wid him, sir, nor have the best in the world widout him. His poor young heart, sir, was fixed upon the place your honour is restorin' us to; an' I'm afeard his mother, sir, would break her heart if she thought he couldn't share our good fortune! And we don't know whether he's livin' or dead! That, sir, is what's afflictin' us. I had some notion of goin' to look for him; but he tould us he would never write, or let us hear from him, till he'd be either one thing or other."

"I can tell you, for your satisfaction, that your son is well, M'Evoy. Believe me, he is well—I know it."

"Well! Before God, does your honour spake truth? Well! Oh, sir, for His sake that died for us, an' for the sake of His blessed mother, can you tell me is my darlin' son alive?"

"He is living; is in excellent health; is as well dressed as I am; and has friends as rich and capable of assisting him as myself. But how is this? What's the matter with you? You are pale! Good God! Here, waiter! Waiter! Waiter, I say!"

The colonel rang the bell violently, and two or three waiters entered at the same moment.

"Bring a little wine and water, one of you, and let the other two remove this man to the open window. Be quick. What do you stare at?"

In a few minutes the old man recovered, and, untying the narrow, coarse cravat which he wore, wiped the perspiration off his pale face.

"Pray don't be too much affected," said the colonel. "Waiter, bring up refreshment—bring wine—be quiet and calm—you are weak, poor fellow—but we will strengthen you by-and-by."

"I am wake, sir," he replied; "for, God help us! this was a hard year upon us; and we suffered what few could bear. But he's livin', colonel. Our darlin' is livin'! Oh, colonel, your kindness went to my heart this day afore, but that was nothin'—he's livin' an well! On my two knees, before God, I thank you for them words! I thank you a thousand an' a thousand times more for them words nor for what your honour did about Yallow Sam."

"Get up," said the colonel—"get up. The proceedings of the day have produced a revulsion of feeling which has rendered you incapable of sustaining intelligence of your son. He is well, I assure you. Bring those things to this table, waiter."

"But can your honour tell me anything in particular about him, sir? What he's doin'—or what he intends to do?"

"Yes! he is at a respectable boarding-school."

"Boordin'-school! But isn't boordin'-schools Protestants, sir?"

"Not all; he is at a Catholic boarding-school, and reading hard to be a priest, which, I hope, he will soon be. He has good friends, and you may thank *him* for being restored to your farm."

"Glory be to my Maker for that! Oh, sir, your tenants wor desaved in you! They thought, sir, that you wor a hard-hearted gintleman, that didn't care whether they lived or died."

"I feel that I neglected them too long, M'Evoy. Now take some refreshment: eat something, and afterwards drink a few glasses of wine. Your feelings have been much excited, and you will be the better for it. Keep up your spirits. I am going to ride, and must leave you: but if you call on me to-morrow, at one o'clock, I shall have more good news for you. We must stock your farm, and enable you to enter upon it creditably."

"Sir," said M'Evoy, "you are a Protestant; but, as I hope to enther glory, I an' my wife an' childhre will pray that your bed may be made in heaven, this night; and that your honour may be led to see the thruth an' the right coorse."

The colonel then left him, and the simple man, on looking at the cold meat, bread, and wine before him, raised his hands and eyes towards

heaven to thank God for his goodness, and to invoke a blessing upon his noble and munificent benefactor.

But how shall we describe the feelings of his family when, after returning home, he related the occurrences of that day. The severe and pressing exigencies under which they laboured had prevented his sons from attending the investigation that was to take place in town. Their expectations, however, were raised, and they looked out with intense anxiety for the return of their father.

At length he was seen coming slowly up the hill; the spades were thrown aside, and the whole family assembled to hear "what was done."

The father entered in silence, sat down, and after wiping his brow, and laying down his hat, placing his staff across it, upon the floor, he drew his breath deeply.

"Dominick," said the wife, "what news? What was done?"

"Vara," replied Dominick, "do you remember the day—fair and handsome you wor then—when I first kissed your lips as my own darlin' wife?"

"Ah, avourneen, Dominick, don't spake of them times. The happiness we had then is long gone, acushla, in one sense."

"It's before me like yestherday, Vara—the delight that went through my heart, jist as clear as yestherday, or the blessed sun that's shinin' through the broken windy on the floor there. I remimber, Vara, saying to you that day—I don't know whether *you* remimber it or not—but *I* remimber sayin' to you, that if I lived a thousand years I could never feel sich happiness as I did when I first pressed you to my heart as my own wife."

"Well, but we want to hear what happened, Dominick, achora."

"Do you remimber the words, Vara?"

"Och! I do, avourneen. *Didn't they go into my heart at the time*, an' *how* could I *forget* them? But I can't bear, somehow, to look back at what we wor then, bekase I feel my heart brakin', acushla!"

"Well, Vara, look at me. Amn't I a poor wasted crathur now, in comparishment to what I was thin?"

"God he sees the change that's in you, darlin'! But sure 'twasn't your fau't, or mine either, Dominick, avillish!"

"Well, Vara, you see me now—I'm happier—before God, I'm happier—happier a thousand degrees, than I was thin'! Come to my arms, asthore machree—my heart's breakin'—but it's wid happiness—don't be frightened—it's wid joy I'm sheddin' these tears—it's wid happiness an' delight I'm crying! Jemmy is livin', an' well, childhre—he's livin' an' well, Vara—the star of our hearts is livin' an' well, an' happy! Kneel down, childhre—kneel down! Bend before the great God, an' thank him for his kindness to your blessed brother—to our blessed son. Bless the colonel, childhre; bless him whin you're down, Protestant an' all as he is. Oh, bless him as if you prayed for myself, or for Jemmy, that's far away from us!"

He paused for a few minutes, bent his head upon his hands as he knelt in supplication at the chair, then resumed his seat, as did the whole family, deeply affected.

"Now, childhre," said he, "I'll tell yees all; but don't any of you be so poor a crathur as I was to-day. Bear it mild an' asy, Vara, acushla, for I know it will take a start out of you. Sure we're to go back to our own ould farm! Ay, an' what's more—oh, God of heaven, bless him!—what's more, the colonel is to stock it for us, an' to help us; an' what is more, Yallow Sam is *out!* OUT!!"

"Out!" they exclaimed: "Jemmy well, an' Yallow Sam out! Oh, father, surely——"

"Now behave, I say. Ay, and never to come in again! But who do you think got him out?"

"Who?—why God he knows. Who *could* get him out?"

"Our son, Vara—our son, childhre: Jemmy got him out, an' got ourselves back to our farm! I had it partly from the noble colonel's own lips, an' the remainder from Mr. M——y, that I met on my way home. But there's more to come: sure Jemmy has friends aquil to the colonel himself: an' sure he's at a Catholic boordin'-school, among gintlemen's childhre, an' in a short time he'll be a priest in full ordhers."

We here draw a veil over the delight of the family. Questions upon questions, replies upon replies, sifting and cross-examinations, followed in rapid succession, until all was known that the worthy man had to communicate.

Another simple scene followed, which, as an Irishman, I write with sorrow. When the joy of the family had somewhat subsided, the father, putting his hand in his coat-pocket, pulled out several large slices of mutton.

"Along wid all, childhre," said he, "the colonel ordhered me my dinner. I ate plenty myself, an' slipped these slices in my pocket for yees: but the devil a one o' me knows what kind o' mate it is. An' I got wine, too! Oh!—well, they may talk, but wine *is* the dhrink! Bring me the ould knife, till I make a fair divide among yees. Musha, what kind o' mate can it be, for myself doesn't remimber atin' any sort, barrin' bacon, an' a bit o' beef of an odd time?"

They all ate with an experimental air of sagacity that was rather amusing. None, however, had ever tasted mutton before, and consequently the nature and quality of the meat remained, on that occasion, a profound secret to M'Evoy and his family.[1] It is true they *supposed* it to be mutton; but not one of them could pronounce it to be such, from any positive knowledge of its peculiar flavour.

"Well," said Dominick, "it's no matther what the name of it is, in regard that it's good mate, anyway, for them that has enough of it."

With a fervent heart and streaming eyes did this virtuous family offer up their grateful prayers to that God whose laws they had not knowingly violated, and to whose providence they owed so much. Nor was their benefactor forgotten. The strength and energy of the Irish language, being that in which the peasantry usually pray, were well adapted to express the depth of their gratitude towards a man who

[1] There are hundreds of thousands—yes, millions—of the poorer classes in Ireland who have never tasted mutton!

had, as they said, "humbled himself to look into their wants, as if he was like one of themselves!"

For upwards of ten years they had not gone to bed free from the heaviness of care, or the wasting grasp of poverty. Now their hearth was once more surrounded by peace and contentment; their burthens were removed, their pulses beat freely, and the language of happiness again was heard under their humble roof. Even sleep could not repress the vivacity of their enjoyments: they dreamt of their brother—for in the Irish heart the domestic affections hold the first place—they dreamt of the farm to which those affections had so long yearned. They trod it again as its legitimate possessors. Its fields were brighter, its corn waved with softer murmurs to the breeze, its harvests were richer, and the song of their harvest home more cheerful than before. Their delight was tumultuous, but intense; and when they arose in the morning to

A sober certainty of waking bliss,

they again knelt in worship to God with exulting hearts, and again offered up their sincere prayers in behalf of the just man who had asserted their rights against the oppressor.

Colonel B—— was a man who, without having been aware of it, possessed an excellent capacity for business. The neglect of his property resulted not from want of feeling, but merely from want of consideration. There had, moreover, been no precedent for him to follow. He had seen no Irishman of rank ever bestow a moment's attention on his tenantry. They had been, for the most part, absentees like himself, and felt satisfied if they succeeded in receiving their half-yearly remittance in due course, without ever reflecting for a moment upon the situation of those from whom it was drawn.

Nay, what was more—he had not seen even the *resident* gentry enter into the state and circumstances of those who lived upon their property. It was a mere accident that determined him to become acquainted with his tenants; but no sooner had he seen his duty, and come to the resolution of performing it, than the decision of his character became apparent. It is true that within the last few years the Irish landlords have advanced in knowledge. Many of them have introduced more improved systems of agriculture, and instructed their tenants in the best methods of applying them; but during the time of which we write, an Irish landlord only saw his tenants when canvassing them for their votes, and instructing them in dishonesty and perjury, not reflecting that he was then teaching them to practise the arts of dissimulation and fraud against himself. This was the late system: let us hope that it will be superseded by a better one; and that a landlord will think it a duty, but neither a trouble nor a condescension, to look into his own affairs, and keep an eye upon the morals and habits of his tenantry.

The colonel, as he had said, remained more than a fortnight upon his estate; and, as he often declared since, the recollections arising from the good which he performed during that bi ef period rendered

it the portion of his past life upon which he could look with most satisfaction. He did not leave the country till he saw M'Evoy and his family restored to their farm, and once more independent—until he had redressed every well-founded complaint, secured the affections of those who had before detested him, and diffused peace and comfort amongst every family upon his estate. From thenceforth he watched the interests of his tenants, and soon found that in promoting their welfare, and instructing them in their duties, he was more his own benefactor than theirs. Before many years had elapsed, his property was wonderfully improved; he himself was called the "Lucky Landlord," "bekase," said the people, "ever since he spoke to, an' advised his tenants, we find that it's *lucky* to live undher him. The people has heart to work wid a gintleman that won't grind thim; an' so sign's on it, everyone thrives upon his land; an' dang my bones, but I believe a rotten stick ud grow on it, set in case it was thried."

In sooth his popularity became proverbial; but it is probable that not even his justice and humanity contributed so much to this as the vigour with which he prosecuted his suit against "Yellow Sam," whom he compelled literally to "disgorge" the fruits of his heartless extortions. This worthy agent died soon after his disgrace, without any legitimate issue; and his property, which amounted to about fifty thousand pounds, is now inherited by a gentleman of the strictest honour and integrity. To this day his memory is detested by the people, who, with that bitterness by which they stigmatise a villain, have erected him into a standard of dishonesty. If a man become remarkable for want of principle, they usually say, "He's as great a rogue as Yellow Sam," or, "He is the greatest sconce that ever was in the country, *barrin'* Yellow Sam."

We now dismiss him, and request our readers, at the same time, not to suppose that we have held him up as a portrait of Irish agents in general. On the contrary, we believe that they constitute a most respectable class of men, who have certainly very difficult duties to perform. The Irish landlords, we are happy to say, taught by experience, have, for the most part, both seen and felt the necessity of appointing gentlemen of property to situations so very important, and which require so much patience, consideration, and humanity in those who fill them. We trust they will persevere in this plan; but we can assure them that all the virtues of the best agent can never compensate, in the opinion of the people, for neglect in the "Head Landlord." One visit or act, even of nominal kindness, from *him*, will at any time produce more attachment and gratitude among them than a whole life spent in good offices by an agent. Like Sterne's French Beggar, they would prefer a pinch of snuff from the one, to a guinea from the other. The agent only renders them a favour, but the Head Landlord does them an honour.

Colonel B—— immediately after his return home, sent for Mr. O'Brien, who waited on him with a greater degree of curiosity than perhaps he had ever felt before. The colonel smiled as he extended his hand to him.

"Mr. O'Brien," said he, "I knew you would feel anxious to hear the result of my visit to the estate which this man with the nickname managed for me."

"*Managed*, sir! Did you say manag*ed?*"

"I spoke in the past time, O'Brien: he is out."

"Then your *protégé's* story was correct, sir?"

"To a tittle. O'Brien, there is something extraordinary in that boy; otherwise, how could it happen that a sickly, miserable-looking creature, absolutely in tatters, could have impressed us both so strongly with a sense of the injustice done ten years ago to his father? It is, indeed, remarkable."

"The boy, colonel, deeply felt that act of injustice, and the expression of it came home to the heart."

"I have restored his father, however. The poor man and his family are once more happy. I have stocked their old farm for them; in fact, they now enjoy comfort and independence"

"I am glad, sir, that you have done them justice. That act, alone, will go far to redeem your character from the odium which the conduct of your agent was calculated to throw upon it."

"There is not, probably, in Ireland, a landlord so popular as I am at this moment—among my tenants on that property. Restoring M'Evoy, however, is but a small part of what I have done. Carson's pranks were incredible. He was a rack-renter of the first water. A person named Brady had paid him twenty-five guineas as a *douceur*—in other words, as a bribe—for renewing a lease for him; yet, after having received the money, he kept the poor man dangling after him, and at length told him that he was offered a larger sum by another. In some cases he kept back the receipts, and made the poor people pay twice, which was still more iniquitous. Then, sir, he would not take bank notes in payment. No; he was so wonderfully conscientious, and so zealously punctual, in fulfilling *my wishes*, as he told them, on the subject, that nothing would pass in payment but gold. This gold, sir, they were compelled to receive from himself at a most oppressive premium: so that he actually fleeced them, under my name, in every conceivable manner and form of villainy. He is a usurer, too; and, I am told, worth forty or fifty thousand pounds: but, thank heaven! he is no longer an agent of mine."

"It gives me sincere pleasure, sir, that you have at length got correct habits of thinking upon your duties as an Irish landlord; for believe me, Colonel B——, as a subject involving a great portion of national happiness or national misery, it is entitled to the deepest and most serious consideration, not only of the class to which you belong, but of the legislature. Something should be done, sir, to improve the condition of the poorer classes. A rich country and poor inhabitants is an anomaly; and whatever is done should be prompt and effectual. If the Irish landlords looked directly into the state of their tenantry, and set themselves vigorously to the task of bettering their circumstances, they would, I am certain, establish the tranquillity and happiness of the country at large. The great secret, colonel, of the dissen-

sions that prevail among us is the poverty of the people. They are poor, and therefore the more easily wrought up to outrage; they are poor, and think that *any* change must be for the better; they are not only poor, but imaginative, and the fittest recipients for those vague speculations by which they are deluded. Let their condition be improved, and the most fertile source of popular tumult and crime is closed. Let them be taught how to labour: let them not be bowed to the earth by rents so far above the real value of their lands. The pernicious maxims which float among them must be refuted—not by theory, but by practical lessons performed before their eyes for their own advantage. Let them be taught how to discriminate between their real interests and their prejudices; and none can teach them all this so effectually as their landlords, if they could be roused from their apathy, and induced to undertake the task. Who ever saw a poor nation without great crimes?"

"Very true, O'Brien—quite true. I am resolved to inspect personally the condition of those who reside on my other estates. But now about our *protégé?* How is he doing?"

"Extremely well. I have had a letter from him a few days ago, in which he alludes to the interest you have taken in himself and his family with a depth of feeling truly affecting."

"When you write to him, let him know that I have placed his father in his old farm; and that Carson is out. Say I am sure he will conduct himself properly, in which case I charge myself with his expenses until he shall have accomplished his purpose. After that he may work his own way through life, and I have no doubt but he will do it well and honourably."

Colonel B——'s pledge on this occasion was nobly redeemed. Our humble hero pursued his studies with zeal and success. In due time he entered Maynooth, where he distinguished himself not simply for smartness as a student, but as a young man possessed of a mind far above the common order. During all this time nothing occurred worthy of particular remark, except that, in fulfilment of his former vow, he never wrote to any of his friends; for the reader should have been told that this was originally comprehended in the determination he had formed. He received ordination at the hands of his friend the bishop, whom we have already introduced to the reader, and on the same day he was appointed by that gentleman to a curacy in his own parish. The colonel, whose regard for him never cooled, presented him with fifty pounds, together with a horse, saddle, and bridle; so that he found himself in a capacity to enter upon his duties in a decent and becoming manner. Another circumstance that added considerably to his satisfaction was the appointment of Mr. O'Brien to a parish adjoining that of the bishop. James's afflictions had been the means of bringing the merits of that excellent man before his spiritual superior, who became much attached to him, and availed himself of the earliest opportunity of rewarding his unobtrusive piety and benevolence.

No sooner was his ordination completed than the long-suppressed

yearnings after his home and kindred came upon his spirit with a power that could not be restrained. He took leave of his friends with a beating heart, and set out on a delightful summer morning to revisit all that had been, notwithstanding his long absence and severe trials, so strongly wrought into his memory and affections. Our readers may, therefore, suppose him on his journey home, and permit themselves to be led in imagination to the house of his former friend. Lanigan, where we must lay the scene for the present.

Lanigan's residence has the same comfortable and warm appearance which always distinguishes the habitation of the independent and virtuous man. What, however, can the stir, and bustle, and agitation which prevail in it mean? The daughters run out to a little mound, or natural terrace, beside the house, and look anxiously towards the road: then return, and almost immediately appear again, with the same intense anxiety to catch a glimpse of someone whom they expect. They look keenly; but why is it that their disappointment appears to be attended with such dismay? They go into their father's house once more, wringing their hands and betraying all the symptoms of affliction. Here is their mother, too, coming to peer into the distance; she is rocking with that motion peculiar to Irishwomen when suffering distress. She places her open hand upon her brows that she may collect her sight to a particular spot; she is blinded by her tears, breaks out into a low wail, and returns with something like the darkness of despair on her countenance. She goes into the house, passes through the kitchen, and enters into a bedroom; seats herself on a chair beside the bed, and renews her low but bitter wail of sorrow. Her husband is lying in that state which the peasantry know usually precedes the agonies of death.

"For the sake of the livin' God," said he, on seeing her, "is there any sign o' them?"

"Not yet, *a suillish*; but they will soon—they must soon, asthore, be here, an' thin your mind will be asy."

"Oh, Alley, Alley, if you could know what I suffer for fraid I'd die widout the priest, you'd pity me!"

"I do pity you, asthore: but don't be cast down, for I have my trust in God that he won't desart you in your last hour. You did what you could, my heart's pride; you bent before Him night an' mornin', and sure the poor neighbour never wint from your door widout lavin' his blessin' behind him."

The dying man raised his hands feebly from the bed-clothes. "Ah!" he exclaimed, "I thought I did a great dale, Alley: but now—but now—it appears nothin' to what I ought to a' done when I could. Still, avourneen, my life's not unpleasant when I look back at it; for I can't remimber that I ever purposely offinded a livin' mortal. All I want to satisfy me is the priest."

"No, avourneen, you did not; for it wasn't in you to offind a child."

"Alley, you'll pardon me an' forgive me, acushla, if ever—if ever I did what was displasin' to you! An' call in the childhre, till I see

them about me—I want to have their forgiveness, too. I know I'll have it—for they wor good childhre, an' ever loved me."

The daughters now entered the room, exclaiming, "*Ahir dheelish* (beloved father), Pether is comin' by himself, but no priest! Blessed Queen of Heaven, what will we do! Oh! father darlin', are you to die widout the Holy Ointment?"

The sick man clasped his hands, looked towards heaven, and groaned aloud.

"Oh, it's hard, this," said he. "It's hard upon me! Yet I won't be cast down. I'll trust in my good God; I'll trust in his blessed name!"

His wife, on hearing that her son was returned without the priest, sat with her face shrouded by her apron, weeping in grief that none but they who know the dependence which those belonging to her Church place in its last rites can comprehend. The children appeared almost distracted; their grief had more of that stunning character which attends unexpected calamity than of sorrow for one who is gradually drawn from life.

At length the messenger entered the room, and, almost choked with tears, stated that both priests were absent that day at Conference, and would not return till late.

The hitherto moderated grief of the wife arose to a pitch much wilder than the death of her husband could, under ordinary circumstances, occasion. To die without absolution—to pass away into eternity "unanointed, unaneled"—without being purified from the inherent stains of humanity—was to her a much deeper affliction than her final separation from him. She cried in tones of the most piercing despair, and clapped her hands, as they do who weep over the dead. Had he died in the calm confidence of having received the *Viaticum*, or Sacrament, before death, his decease would have had nothing remarkably calamitous in it, beyond usual occurrences of a similar nature. Now the grief was intensely bitter in consequence of his expected departure without the priest. His sons and daughters felt it as forcibly as his wife; their lamentations were full of the strongest and sharpest agony.

For nearly three hours did they remain in this situation; poor Lanigan sinking by degrees into that collapsed state from which there is no possibility of rallying. He was merely able to speak, and recognise his family; but every moment advanced him, with awful certainty, nearer and nearer to his end.

A great number of the neighbours were now assembled, all participating in the awful feeling which predominated, and anxious to compensate by their prayers for the absence of that confidence derived by Roman Catholics, during the approach of death, from the spiritual aid of the priest. They were all at prayer; the sick room and kitchen were crowded with his friends and acquaintances, many of whom knelt out before the door, and joined with loud voices in the Rosary which was offered up in his behalf.

In this crisis were they, when a horseman, dressed in black,

approached the house. Every head was instantly turned round, with a hope that it might be the parish priest or his curate; but, alas! they were doomed to experience a fresh disappointment. The stranger, though clerical enough in his appearance, presented a countenance with which none of them was acquainted. On glancing at the group who knelt around the door, he appeared to understand the melancholy cause which brought them together.

"How is this?" he exclaimed. "Is there anyone here sick or dying?"

"Poor Misther Lanigan, sir, is jist departin', glory be to God! An' what is terrible all out upon himself and family, he's dyin' widout the priest. They're both at Conwhirence, sir, an' can't come—Mr. Dogherty an' his curate."

"Make way!" said the stranger, throwing himself off his horse, and passing quickly through the people. "Show me to the sick man's room—be quick, my friends—I am a Catholic clergyman."

In a moment a passage was cleared, and the stranger found himself beside the bed of death. Grief in the room was loud and bitter; but his presence stilled it, despite of what they felt.

"My dear friends," said he, "you know there should be silence in the apartment of a dying man. For shame!—for shame! Cease this clamour; it will but distract him for whom you weep, and prevent him from composing his mind for the great trial that is before him."

"Sir," said Lanigan's wife, seizing his hand in both hers, and looking distractedly in his face, "are you a priest? For heaven's sake tell us!"

"I am," he replied; "leave the room every one of you. I hope your husband is not speechless?"

"Sweet Queen of Heaven, not yet, may her name be praised! but near it, your reverence—widin little or no time of it."

Whilst they spoke, he was engaged in putting the stole about his neck, after which he cleared the room, and commenced hearing Lanigan's confession.

The appearance of a priest, and the consolation it produced, rallied the powers of life in the benevolent farmer. He became more collected; made a clear and satisfactory confession; received the sacrament of extreme unction; and felt himself able to speak with tolerable distinctness and precision. The effects of all this were astonishing. A placid serenity, full of hope and confidence, beamed from the pale and worn features of him who was but a few minutes before in a state of terror altogether indescribable. When his wife and family, after having been called in, observed this change, they immediately participated in his tranquillity. Death had been deprived of its sting, and grief of its bitterness; their sorrow was still deep, but it was not darkened by the dread of future misery. They felt for him as a beloved father, a kind husband, and a dear friend, who had lived a virtuous life, feared God, and was now about to pass into happiness.

When the rites of the Church were administered, and the family

again assembled around the bed, the priest sat down in a position which enabled him to see the features of this good man more distinctly.

"I would be glad," said Lanigan, "to know who it is that God in his goodness has sent to smooth my bed in death, if it ud be plasin', sir, to you to tell me?"

"Do you remember," replied the priest, "a young lad whom you met some years ago on his way to Munster as a poor scholar? You and your family were particularly kind to him; so kind that he has never since forgotten your affectionate hospitality."

"We do, your reverence, we do. A mild, gentle crathur he was, poor boy. I hope God prospered him."

"You see him now before you," said the priest. "I am that boy, and I thank God that I can testify, however slightly, my deep sense of the virtues which you exercised towards me; although I regret that the occasion is one of such affliction."

The farmer raised his eyes and feeble hands towards heaven. "Praise an' glory to your name, good God!" he exclaimed. "Praise an' glory to your holy name! Now I know that I'm not forgotten, when you brought back the little kindness I did that boy for *your sake*, wid so many blessins to me in the hour of my affliction an' sufferin'! Childhre, remimber this, now that I'm goin' to lave yees for ever! Remimber always to help the stranger, an' thim that's poor an' in sorrow. If you do, God won't forget it to you; but will bring it back to yees when you stand in need of it, as he has done to me this day. You see, childhre dear, how small trifles o' that kind depend on one another. If I hadn't thought of helpin' his reverence here, when he was young an' away from his own, he wouldn't think of callin' upon us this day as he was passin'. You see the hand of God is in it, childhre: which it is, indeed, in everything that passes about us, if we could only see it as we ought to do. Thin, but I'd like to look upon your face, sir, if it's plasin' to you? A little more to the light, sir. There, I now see you. Ay, indeed, it's changed for the betther, it is—the same mild, clear countenance, but not sorrowful, as when I seen it last. Suffer me to put my hand on your head, sir; I'd like to bless you before I die, for I can't forget what you undhertook to do for your paarents."

The priest sat near him; but finding that he was scarcely able to raise his hand to his head, he knelt down, and the farmer, before he communicated the blessing, inquired:

"Musha, sir, may I ax, wor you able to do anythink to help your family as you expected?"

"God," said the priest, "made me the instrument of raising them from their poverty; they are now comfortable and happy."

"Ay! Well I knew at the time, an' I said it, that a blessin' would attind your endayvours. An' now resave *my* blessin'. May you never depart from the right way! May the blessin' of God rest upon you for ever—Amin! Childhre, I'm gettin' wake; come near me, till—till I bless you, too, for the last time! They wor good childhre, sir—they were ever an' always good to me, an' to their poor mother, your

reverence; an'—God forgive me if it's a sin!—but I feel a grate dale o' my heart an' my love fixed upon them. But sure, I'm their father, an' God, I hope, will look over it! Now, darlins, afore I bless yees, I axe your forgiveness if ever I was harsher to yees than I ought!"

The children with a simultaneous movement encircled his bed, and could not reply for some minutes.

"Never, father darlin'! Oh, never did you offind us! Don't speak in that way, or you'll break our hearts; but forgive *us*, fatner asthore! Oh, forgive an' bless us, an' don't remimber against us our folly an' disobedience, for it's only now that we see we warn't towards you as we ought to be. Forgive us an' pardon us!"

He then made them all kneel around his bed, and with solemn words, and an impressive manner, placed his hand upon their heads, and blessed them with a virtuous father's last blessing.

He then called for his wife, and the scene became not only more touching, but more elevated. There was an exultation in her manner, and an expression of vivid hope in her eye, arising from the fact of her husband having received, and been soothed by, the rites of her Church, that gave evident proof of the unparalleled attachment borne by persons of her class to the Catholic religion. The arrival of our hero had been so unexpected, and the terrors of the tender wife for her husband's soul so great, that the administration of the sacrament almost superseded from her heart every other sensation than that of devotional triumph. Even now, in the midst of her tears, that triumph kindled in her eye, with a light that shone in melancholy beauty upon the bed of death. In proportion, however, as the parting scene—which was to be their *last*—began to work with greater power upon her sorrow, so did this expression gradually fade away. Grief for his loss resumed its dominion over her heart so strongly that their last parting was afflicting even to look upon.

When it was over, Lanigan once more addressed the priest.

"Now, sir," he observed, but with great difficulty, "let me have *your* blessin' an' your prayers; an' along wid that, your reverence, if you remimber a request I once made to you ——"

"I remember it well," replied the priest: "you allude to the masses which you wished me to say for you, should I ever receive Orders. Make your mind easy on that point. I not only *shall* offer up mass for the repose of your soul, but I can assure you that I *have* mentioned you by name in every mass which I celebrated since my ordination."

He then proceeded to direct the mind of his dying benefactor to such subjects as were best calculated to comfort and strengthen him.

About daybreak the next morning this man of many virtues, after struggling rather severely for two hours preceding his death, passed into eternity, there to enjoy the recompense of a well-spent life.

When he was dead, the priest, who never left him during the night, approached the bed, and after surveying his benevolent features, now composed in the stillness of death, exclaimed:

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them!"

Having uttered these words aloud, he sat down beside the bed, buried his face in his handkerchief, and wept.

He was now only a short day's journey from home, and as his presence, he knew, would be rather a restraint upon a family so much in affliction, he bade them farewell, and proceeded on his way. He travelled slowly, and, as every well-known hill or lake appeared to him, his heart beat quickly, his memory gave up its early stores, and his affections prepared themselves for the trial that was before them.

"It is better for me not to arrive," thought he, "until the family shall have returned from their daily labour, and are collected about the hearth."

In the meantime, many an impression of profound and fervid piety came over him, when he reflected upon the incontrovertible proofs of providential protection and interference which had been, during his absence from home, under his struggles, and in his good fortune, so clearly laid before him. "Deep," he exclaimed, "is the gratitude I owe to God for this; may I never forget to acknowledge it!"

It was now about seven o'clock; the evening was calm, and the sun shone with that clear amber light which gives warmth and the power of exciting tenderness to natural scenery. He had already gained the ascent which commanded a view of the rich sweep of country that reposed below. There it lay—his native home—his native parish—bathed in the light and glory of the hour. Its fields were green — its rivers shining like loosened silver — its meadows already studded with haycocks, its green pastures covered with sheep, and its unruffled lakes reflecting the hills under which they lay. Here and there a gentleman's residence rose among the distant trees, and well did he recognise the church spire that cut into the western sky on his right. It is true, nothing of the grandeur and magnificence of nature was there; everything was simple in its beauty. The quiet charm, the serene light, the air of happiness and peace that reposed upon all he saw, stirred up a thousand tender feelings in a heart whose gentle character resembled that of the prospect which it felt so exquisitely. The smoke of a few farm-houses and cottages rose in blue, graceful columns to the air, giving just that appearance of life which was necessary; and a figure or two, with lengthened shadows, moved across the fields and meadows a little below where he stood.

But our readers need not to be told that there was one spot which, beyond all others, riveted his attention. On that spot his eager eye rested long and intensely. The spell of its remembrance had clung to his early heart: he had never seen it in his dreams without weeping; and often had the agitation of his imaginary sorrow awoke him with his eyelashes steeped in tears. He looked down on it steadily. At length he was moved with a strong sensation like grief: he sobbed twice or thrice, and the tears rolled in showers from his eyes. His gathering affections were relieved by this: he felt lighter, and in the same slow manner rode onward to his father's house.

To this there were two modes of access: one by a paved bridleway, or *boreen*, that ran up directly before the door—the other by a green

lane, that diverged from the *boreen* about a furlong below the house. He took the latter, certain that the family could not notice his approach, nor hear the noise of his horse's footsteps, until he could arrive at the very threshold. On dismounting, he felt that he could scarcely walk. He approached the door, however, as steadily as he could. He entered — and the family, who had just finished their supper, rose up, as a mark of their respect to the stranger.

"Is this," he inquired, "the house in which Dominick M'Evoy lives?"

"That's my name, sir," replied Dominick.

"The family, I trust, are—all—well? I have been desired—but no —no—I cannot—I cannot!—FATHER!—MOTHER?"

"It's *him!*" shrieked the mother—"It's himself!—Jemmy!"

"Jemmy!—Jemmy!" shouted the father, with a cry of joy which might be heard far beyond the house.

"Jemmy!—our poor Jemmy!" exclaimed his brothers and sisters.

"Asy, childhre," said the father—"asy; let the mother to him—let *her* to him. Who has the right that *she* has? Vara, asthore—Vara, think of yourself. God of heaven! what is comin' over her?—Her brain's turned!"

"Father, don't remove her," said the son. "Leave her arms where they are: it's long since they encircled my neck before. Often—often would I have given the wealth of the universe to be encircled in my blessed and beloved mother's arms! Yes, yes!—Weep, my father—weep, each of you. You see those tears; consider them as a proof that I have never forgotten you! Beloved mother! recollect yourself: she knows me not—her eyes wander!—I fear the shock has been too much for her. Place a chair at the door, and I will bring her to the air."

After considerable effort the mother's faculties were restored so far as to be merely conscious that our hero was her son. She had not yet shed a tear, but now she surveyed his countenance, smiled and named him, placed her hands upon him, and examined his dress with a singular blending of conflicting emotions, but still without being thoroughly collected.

"I will speak to her," said Jemmy, "in Irish; it will go directly to her heart. *Mhair, avourneen, tha ma, laht, anish!*—Mother, my darling, I am with you at last."

"*Shamus, aroon, avick ma chree, wuil thu lhum? wuil thu—wuil thu lhum?*—Jemmy, my beloved, son of my heart, are you with me?—are you—are you with me?"

"*Ish maheen a tha in, a vair dheelish machree.*—It is *I* who am with you, beloved mother of my heart!"

She smiled again, but only for a moment. She looked at him, laid his head upon her bosom, bedewed his face with her tears, and muttered out, in a kind of sweet, musical cadence, the Irish cry of joy.

We are incapable of describing this scene further. Our readers must be contented to know that the delight and happiness of our hero's whole family were complete. Their son, after many years of toil and

struggle, had at length succeeded, by a virtuous course of action, in raising them from poverty to comfort, and in effecting his own object, which was to become a member of the Catholic priesthood. During all his trials he never failed to rely on God ; and it is seldom that those who rely upon Him, when striving to attain a laudable purpose, are ever ultimately disappointed.

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We regret to inform our readers that the poor scholar is dead ! He did not, in fact, long survive the accomplishment of his wishes. But as we had the particulars of his story from his nearest friends, we thought his virtues of too exalted a nature to pass into oblivion without some record, however humble. He died as he had lived—the friend of God and of man.

WILDGOOSE LODGE.

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HAD read the anonymous summons, but, from its general import, I believed it to be one of those special meetings convened for some purpose affecting the usual objects and proceedings of the body ; at least, the terms in which it was conveyed to me had nothing extraordinary or mysterious in them beyond the simple fact that it was not to be a general but a select meeting : this mark of confidence flattered me, and I determined to attend punctually. I was, it is true, desired to keep the circumstance entirely to myself ; but there was nothing startling in this, for I had often received summonses of a similar nature. I therefore resolved to attend, according to the letter of my instructions, "on the next night, at the solemn hour of midnight, to deliberate and act upon such matters as should then and there be submitted to my consideration." The morning after I received this message I arose and resumed my usual occupations ; but, from whatever cause it may have proceeded, I felt a sense of approaching evil hang heavily upon me : the beats of my pulse were languid, and an undefinable feeling of anxiety pervaded my whole spirit ; even my face was pale, and my eye so heavy that my father and brothers concluded me to be ill ; an opinion which I thought at the time to be correct, for I felt exactly that kind of depression which precedes a severe fever. I could not understand what I experienced, nor can I yet, except by supposing that there is in human nature some mysterious faculty by which, in coming calamities, the dread of some fearful evil is anticipated, and that it is possible to catch a dark presentiment of the sensations which they subsequently produce. For my part, I can neither analyze nor define it ; but on that day I knew it by painful experience, and so have a thousand others in similar circumstances.

It was about the middle of winter. The day was gloomy and tempestuous almost beyond any other I remember : dark clouds rolled over the hills about me, and a close, sleet-like rain fell in slanting drifts that chased each other rapidly towards the earth on the course of the blast. The outlying cattle sought the closest and calmest corners of the fields for shelter ; the trees and young groves were tossed about, for the wind was so unusually high that it swept in hollow gusts through them with that hoarse murmur which deepens so powerfully on the mind the sense of dreariness and desolation.

As the shades of night fell, the storm, if possible, increased. The moon was half gone, and only a few stars were visible by glimpses, as a rush of wind left a temporary opening in the sky. I had determined, if the storm should not abate, to incur any penalty rather than attend the meeting ; but the appointed hour was distant, and I resolved to be decided by the future state of the night.

Ten o'clock came, but still there was no change ; eleven passed, and on opening the door to observe if there were any likelihood of its clearing up, a blast of wind, mingled with rain, nearly blew me off my feet. At length it was approaching to the hour of midnight ; and on examining a third time, I found it had calmed a little, and no longer rained.

I instantly got my oak stick, muffled myself in my great coat, strapped my hat about my ears, and, as the place of meeting was only a quarter of a mile distant, I presently set out.

The appearance of the heavens was lowering and angry, particularly in that point where the light of the moon fell against the clouds, from a seeming chasm in them, through which alone she was visible. The edges of this chasm were faintly bronzed, but the dense body of the masses that hung piled on each side of her was black and impenetrable to sight. In no other point of the heavens was there any part of the sky visible : a deep veil of clouds overhung the horizon, yet was the light sufficient to give occasional glimpses of the rapid shifting which took place in this dark canopy, and of the tempestuous agitation with which the midnight storm swept to and fro beneath it.

At length I arrived at a long slated house, situated in a solitary part of the neighbourhood ; a little below it ran a small stream, which was now swollen above its banks, and rushing with mimic roar over the flat meadows beside it. The appearance of the bare slated building in such a night was particularly sombre, and to those, like me, who knew the purpose to which it was usually devoted, it was, or ought to have been, peculiarly so. There it stood, silent and gloomy, without any appearance of human life or enjoyment about or within it. As I approached, the moon once more had broken out of the clouds, and shone dimly upon the wet, glittering slates and windows with a death-like lustre, that gradually faded away as I left the point of observation and entered the folding-door. It was the parish chapel.

The scene which presented itself here was in keeping not only with the external appearance of the house, but with the darkness, the storm, and the hour, which was now a little after midnight. About eighty persons were sitting in dead silence upon the circular steps of

the altar. They did not seem to move ; and as I entered and advanced the echo of my footsteps rang through the building with a lonely distinctness, which added to the solemnity and mystery of the circumstances about me. The windows were secured with shutters on the inside, and on the altar a candle was lighted, which burned dimly amid the surrounding darkness, and lengthened the shadow of the altar itself, and those of six or seven persons who stood on its upper steps, until they mingled in the obscurity which shrouded the lower end of the chapel. The faces of the men who sat on the altar steps were not distinctly visible, yet their prominent and more characteristic features were in sufficient relief, and I observed that some of the most malignant and reckless spirits in the parish were assembled. In the eyes of those who stood at the altar, and whom I knew to be invested with authority over the others, I could perceive gleams of some latent and ferocious purpose, kindled, as I soon observed, into a fiercer expression of vengeance by the additional excitement of ardent spirits, with which they had stimulated themselves to a point of determination that mocked at the apprehension of all future responsibility, either in this world or the next.

The welcome which I received on joining them was far different from the boisterous good-humour that used to mark our greetings on other occasions : just a nod of the head from this or that person, on the part of those *who sat*, with a *ghud dhemur tha thu?*[1] in a suppressed voice, even below a common whisper : but from the standing group, who were evidently the projectors of the enterprise, I received a convulsive grasp of the hand, accompanied by a fierce and desperate look, that seemed to search my eye and countenance, to try if I were a person not likely to shrink from whatever they had resolved to execute. It is surprising to think of the powerful expression which a moment of intense interest or great danger is capable of giving to the eye, the features, and the slightest actions, especially in those whose station in society does not require them to constrain nature, by the force of social courtesies, into habits that conceal their natural emotions. None of the standing group spoke ; but as each of them wrung my hand in silence, his eye was fixed on mine with an expression of drunken confidence and secrecy, and an insolent determination not to be gainsayed without peril. If looks could be translated with certainty, they seemed to say, "We are bound upon a project of vengeance, and if you do not join us, remember that we *can* revenge." Along with this grasp they did not forget to remind me of the common bond by which we were united, for each man gave me the secret grip of Ribbonism in a manner that made the joints of my fingers ache for some minutes afterwards.

There was one present, however—the highest in authority—whose actions and demeanour were calm and unexcited. He seemed to labour under no unusual influence whatever, but evinced a serenity so placid and philosophical that I attributed the silence of the sitting

[1] How are you?

group, and the restraint which curbed in the out-breaking passions of those who *stood*, entirely to his presence. He was a schoolmaster, who taught his daily school in that chapel, and acted also, on Sunday, in the capacity of clerk to the priest—an excellent and amiable old man, who knew little of his illegal connections and atrocious conduct.

When the ceremonies of brotherly recognition and friendship were past, the captain (by which title I shall designate the last-mentioned person) stooped, and raising a jar of whisky on the corner of the altar, held a wine-glass to its neck, which he filled, and, with a calm nod, handed it to me to drink. I shrunk back, with an instinctive horror at the profaneness of such an act, in the house, and on the altar, of God, and peremptorily refused to taste the proffered draught. He smiled mildly at what he considered my superstition, and added quietly, and in a low voice, "You'll be wantin' it, I'm thinkin', afther the wettin' you got."

"Wet or dry," said I ——

"Stop, man!" he replied, in the same tone; "spake low. But why wouldn't you take the whisky? Sure there's as holy people to the fore as you: didn't they all take it? An' I wish we may never do worse nor dhrink a harmless glass o' whisky to keep the-cowld out, anyway."

"Well," said I, "I'll jist trust to God and the consequences for the cowld, Paddy, ma bouchal; but a blessed dhrop of it won't be crossin' my lips, avick; so no more ghosther about it—dhrink it yourself, if you like. Maybe you want it as much as I do; wherein I've the patthern of a good big coat upon me, so thick, your sowl, that if it was rainin' bullocks a dhrop wouldn't get under the nap of it."

He gave me a calm but keen glance, as I spoke.

"Well, Jim," said he, "it's a good comrade you've got for the weather that's in it; but, in the manetime, to set you a dacent patthern, I'll just take this myself"—saying which, with the jar still upon its side, and the forefinger of his left hand in its neck, he swallowed the spirits. "It's the first I dhrank to-night," he added, "nor would I dhrink it now, only to show you that I've heart an' spirit to do the thing that we're all bound an' sworn to, when the proper time comes;" after which he laid down the glass, and turned up the jar, with much coolness, upon the altar.

During our conversation those who had been summoned to this mysterious meeting were pouring in fast; and as each person approached the altar he received from one to two or three glasses of whisky, according as he chose to limit himself; but, to do them justice, there were not a few of those present who, in spite of their own desire, and the captain's express invitation, refused to taste it in the house of God's worship. Such, however, as were scrupulous he afterwards recommended to take it on the outside of the chapel door, which they did, as, by that means, the sacrilege of the act was supposed to be evaded.

About one o'clock they were all assembled except six; at least, so the captain asserted, on looking at a written paper.

"Now, boys," said he, in the same low voice, "we are all present except the thraitors whose names I am goin' to read to you; not that

we are to count thim thraitors, till we know whether or not it was in their power to come. Anyhow, the night's terrible—but, boys, you're to know that neither fire nor wather is to prevint yees, when duly summoned to attind a meeting—particularly whin the summons is widout a name, as you have been told that there is always something of consequence to be done *thin*."

He then read out the names of those who were absent, in order that the real cause of their absence might be ascertained, declaring that they would be dealt with accordingly. After this, with his usual caution, he shut and bolted the door, and having put the key in his pocket, ascended the steps of the altar, and for some time traversed the little platform, from which the priest usually addresses the congregation.

Until this night I had never contemplated the man's countenance with any particular interest; but as he walked the platform I had an opportunity of observing him more closely. He was slight in person, apparently not thirty; and, on a first view, appeared to have nothing remarkable in his dress or features. I, however, was not the only person whose eyes were fixed upon him at that moment; in fact, everyone present observed him with equal interest, for hitherto he had kept the object of the meeting perfectly secret, and of course we all felt anxious to know it. It was while he traversed the platform that I scrutinised his features with a hope, if possible, to glean from them some evidence of what was passing within him. I could, however, mark but little, and that little was at first rather from the intelligence which seemed to subsist between him and those whom I have already mentioned as *standing* against the altar than from any indication of his own. Their gleaming eyes were fixed upon him with an intensity of savage and demon-like hope which blazed out in flashes of malignant triumph, as, upon turning, he threw a cool but rapid glance at them, to intimate the progress he was making in the subject to which he devoted the undivided energies of his mind. But in the course of his meditation I could observe, on one or two occasions, a dark shade come over his countenance, that contracted his brow into a deep furrow, and it was then, for the first time, that I saw the Satanic expression of which his face, by a very slight motion of its muscles, was capable. His hands, during this silence, closed and opened convulsively; his eyes shot out two or three baleful glances, first to his confederates, and afterwards vacantly into the deep gloom of the lower part of the chapel; his teeth ground against each other like those of a man whose revenge burns to reach a distant enemy, and finally, after having wound himself up to a certain determination, his features relapsed into their original calm and undisturbed expression.

At this moment a loud laugh, having something supernatural in it, rang out wildly from the darkness of the chapel: he stopped, and putting his open hand over his brows, peered down into the gloom, and said calmly, in Irish, "*Bee dhu husth; ha nihl anam inh*—hold your tongue, it is not yet the time."

Every eye was now directed to the same spot, but, in consequence of its distance from the dim light on the altar, none could perceive the person from whom the laugh proceeded. It was, by this time, near two o'clock in the morning.

He now stood for a few moments on the platform, and his chest heaved with a depth of anxiety equal to the difficulty of the design he wished to accomplish.

"Brothers," said he,—"for we are all brothers—sworn upon all that's blessed an' holy to obey whatever them that's over us, *manin' among ourselves*,[1] wishes us to do—are you now ready, in the name of God, upon whose althar I stand, to fulfil yer oaths?"

The words were scarcely uttered, when those who had *stood* beside the altar during the night sprang from their places, and descending its steps rapidly, turned round, and raising their arms, exclaimed, "By all that's sacred an' holy, we're willin'."

In the meantime, those who *sat* upon the steps of the altar instantly rose, and following the example of those who had just spoken, exclaimed after them, "To be sure—by all that's sacred an' holy, we're willin'."

"Now boys," said the captain, "ar'n't yees big fools for your pains? an' one of yees doesn't know what I mane."

"You're our captain," said one of those who had stood at the altar, "an' has yer ordhers from higher quarthers; of coorse, whatever ye command upon us we're bound to obey you in."

"Well," said he, smiling, "I only wanted to thry yees; an' by the oath yees tuck, there's not a captain in the county has as good a right to be proud of his min as I have. Well, yees won't rue it, maybe, when the right time comes; and for that same rason every one of yees must have a glass from the jar; thim that won't dhrink it *in* the chapel can dhrink it *widout*; an' here goes to open the door for them."

He then distributed another glass to every man who would accept it, and brought the jar afterwards to the chapel door, to satisfy the scruples of those who would not drink within. When this was performed, and all duly excited, he proceeded:

"Now, brothers, you are solemnly sworn to obay me, and I'm sure there's no thraithur here that ud parjure himself for a thrifle; but *I'm* sworn to obay them that's above me, manin' still among ourselves; an' to show you that I don't scruple to do it, here goes!"

He then turned round, and taking the Missal between his hands, placed it upon the altar. Hitherto every word was uttered in a low, precautionary tone; but on grasping the book he again turned round, and looking upon his confederates with the same Satanic expression which marked his countenance before, exclaimed, in a voice of deep determination:

"By this sacred an' holy book of God, I will perform the action which we have met this night to accomplish, be that what it may; an' this I swear upon God's book an' God's althar!"

[1] In opposition to the constituted authorities.

On concluding he struck the book violently with his open hand.

At this moment the candle which burned before him went suddenly out, and the chapel was wrapped in pitchy darkness ; the sound as if of rushing wings fell upon our ears, and fifty voices dwelt upon the last words of his oath with wild and supernatural tones, that seemed to echo and to mock what he had sworn. There was a pause, and an exclamation of horror from all present : but the captain was too cool and steady to be disconcerted. He immediately groped about until he got the candle, and proceeding calmly to a remote corner of the chapel, took up a half-burned turf which lay there, and after some trouble, succeeded in lighting it again. He then explained what had taken place ; which indeed was easily done, as the candle happened to be extinguished by a pigeon which sat directly above it. The chapel, I should have observed, was at this time, like many country chapels, unfinished inside, and the pigeons of a neighbouring dove-cote had built nests among the rafters of the unceiled roof ; which circumstance also explained the rushing of the wings, for the birds had been affrighted by the sudden loudness of the noise. The mocking voices were nothing but the echoes, rendered naturally more awful by the scene, the mysterious object of the meeting, and the solemn hour of the night.

When the candle was again lighted, and these startling circumstances accounted for, the persons whose vengeance had been deepening more and more during the night rushed to the altar in a body, where each, in a voice trembling with passionate eagerness, repeated the oath, and as every word was pronounced, the same echoes heightened the wildness of the horrible ceremony by their long and unearthly tones. The countenances of these human tigers were livid with suppressed rage : their knit brows, compressed lips, and kindled eyes fell under the dim light of the taper with an expression calculated to sicken any heart not absolutely diabolical.

As soon as this dreadful rite was completed we were again startled by several loud bursts of laughter, which proceeded from the lower darkness of the chapel, and the captain, on hearing them, turned to the place, and reflecting for a moment, said in Irish, "*Gutsho nish, avohelhee*—come hither now, boys."

A rush immediately took place from the corner in which they had secreted themselves all the night ; and seven men appeared, whom we instantly recognised as brothers and cousins of certain persons who had been convicted, some time before, for breaking into the house of an honest poor man in the neighbourhood, from whom, after having treated him with barbarous violence, they took away such fire-arms as he kept for his own protection.

It was evidently not the captain's intention to have produced these persons until the oath should have been generally taken, but the exulting mirth with which they enjoyed the success of his scheme betrayed them, and put him to the necessity of bringing them forward somewhat before the concerted moment.

The scene which now took place was beyond all power of description ; peals of wild, fiend-like yells rang through the chapel, as the

party which *stood* on the altar, and that which had crouched in the darkness, met; wringing of hands, leaping in triumph, striking of sticks and fire-arms against the ground and the altar itself, dancing and cracking of fingers, marked the triumph of some hellish determination. Even the captain for a time was unable to restrain their fury; but at length he mounted the platform before the altar once more, and, with a stamp of his foot, recalled their attention to himself and the matter in hand.

"Boys," said he, "enough of this, and too much; an' well for us it is that the chapel is in a lonely place, or our foolish noise might do us no good. Let thim that swore so manfully jist now stand a one side, till the rest kiss the book, one by one."

The proceedings, however, had by this time taken too fearful a shape for even the captain to compel them to a blindfold oath; the first man he called flatly refused to answer until he should hear the nature of the service that was required. This was echoed by the remainder, who, taking courage from the firmness of this person, declared generally that until they first knew the business they were to execute none of them would take the oath. The captain's lip quivered slightly, and his brow again became knit with the same hellish expression, which I have remarked gave him so much the appearance of an embodied fiend; but this speedily passed away, and was succeeded by a malignant sneer, in which lurked, if there ever did in a sneer, "a laughing devil," calmly, determinedly atrocious.

"It wasn't worth yer whiles to refuse the oath," said he, mildly, "for the truth is, I had next to nothing for yees to do. Not a hand, maybe, would have to *rise,* only jist to look on, an' if any resistance would be made, to show yourselves; yer numbers would soon make them see that resistance would be no use whatever in the present case. At all evints, the oath of *secrecy must* be taken, or woe be to him that will refuse *that;* he won't know the day, nor the hour, nor the minute, when he'll be made a spatchcock ov."

He then turned round, and placing his right hand on the Missal, swore, "In the presence of God, and before his holy altar, that whatever might take place that night he would keep secret from man or mortal, except the priest, and that neither bribery, nor imprisonment, nor death would wring it from his heart."

Having done this, he again struck the book violently, as if to confirm the energy with which he swore, and then calmly descending the steps, stood with a serene countenance, like a man conscious of having performed a good action. As this oath did not pledge those who refused to take the other to the perpetration of any specific crime, it was readily taken by all present. Preparations were then made to execute what was intended; the half-burned turf was placed in a little pot; another glass of whisky was distributed; and the door being locked by the captain, who kept the key as parish clerk and master, the crowd departed silently from the chapel.

The moment those who lay in the darkness during the night made

their appearance at the altar, we knew at once the persons we were to visit; for, as I said before, they were related to the miscreants whom one of those persons had convicted, in consequence of their midnight attack upon himself and his family. The captain's object in keeping them unseen was that those present, not being aware of the duty about to be imposed on them, might have less hesitation about swearing to its fulfilment. Our conjectures were correct, for on leaving the chapel we directed our steps to the house in which this devoted man resided.

The night was still stormy, but without rain; it was rather dark, too, though not so as to prevent us from seeing the clouds careering swiftly through the air. The dense curtain which had overhung and obscured the horizon was now broken, and large sections of the sky were clear, and thinly studded with stars that looked dim and watery, as did indeed the whole firmament; for in some places black clouds were still visible, threatening a continuance of tempestuous weather. The road appeared washed and gravelly; every dike was full of yellow water; and every little rivulet and larger stream dashed its hoarse music in our ears; every blast, too, was cold, fierce, and wintry, sometimes driving us back to a standstill, and again, when a turn in the road would bring it in our backs, whirling us along for a few steps with involuntary rapidity. At length the fated dwelling became visible, and a short consultation was held in a sheltered place between the captain and the two parties who seemed so eager for its destruction. The fire-arms were now loaded, and their bayonets and short pikes, the latter shod and pointed with iron, were also got ready. The live coal which was brought in the small pot had become extinguished; but to remedy this two or three persons from a remote part of the county entered a cabin on the wayside, and under pretence of lighting their own and their comrades' pipes, procured a coal of fire, for so they called a lighted turf. From the time we left the chapel until this moment a profound silence had been maintained, a circumstance which, when I considered the number of persons present, and the mysterious and dreaded object of their journey, had a most appalling effect upon my spirits.

At length we arrived within fifty perches of the house, walking in a compact body, and with as little noise as possible; but it seemed as if the very elements had conspired to frustrate our design, for on advancing within the shade of the farm-hedge, two or three persons found themselves up to the middle in water, and on stooping to ascertain more accurately the state of the place, we could see nothing but one immense sheet of it—spread like a lake over the meadows which surrounded the spot we wished to reach.

Fatal night! The very recollection of it, when associated with the fearful tempests of the elements, grows, if that were possible, yet more wild and revolting. Had we been engaged in any innocent or benevolent enterprise, there was something in our situation just then that had a touch of interest in it to a mind imbued with a relish for the savage beauties of nature. There we stood, about a hundred and

thirty in number, our dark forms bent forward, peering into the dusky expanse of water, with its dim gleams of reflected light, broken by the weltering of the mimic waves into ten thousand fragments, whilst the few stars that overhung it in the firmament appeared to shoot through it in broken lines, and to be multiplied fifty-fold in the gloomy mirror on which we gazed.

Over us was a stormy sky, and around us a darkness through which we could only distinguish, in outline, the nearest objects, whilst the wind swept strongly and dismally upon us. When it was discovered that the common pathway to the house was inundated, we were about to abandon our object and return home. The captain, however, stooped down low for a moment, and, almost closing his eyes, looked along the surface of the waters, and then, raising himself very calmly, said, in his usual quiet tone, "Yees needn't go back, boys, I've found a way; jist follow me."

He immediately took a more circuitous direction, by which we reached a causeway that had been raised for the purpose of giving a free passage to and from the house during such inundations as the present. Along this we had advanced more than half way, when we discovered a breach in it, which, as afterwards appeared, had that night been made by the strength of the flood. This, by means of our sticks and pikes, we found to be about three feet deep and eight yards broad. Again we were at a loss how to proceed, when the fertile brain of the captain devised a method of crossing it.

"Boys," said he, "of coorse you've all played at leap-frog; very well, strip and go in, a dozen of you, lean one upon the back of another from this to the opposite bank, where one must stand facing the outside man, both their shoulders agin one another, that the outside man may be supported. Then *we* can creep over you, an' a dacent bridge you'll be, anyway."

This was the work of only a few minutes, and in less than ten we were all safely over.

Merciful heaven! how I sicken at the recollection of what is to follow! On reaching the dry bank, we proceeded instantly, and in profound silence, to the house; the captain divided us into companies, and then assigned to each division its proper station. The two parties who had been so vindictive all the night he kept about himself; for of those who were present they only were in his confidence, and knew his nefarious purpose: their number was about fifteen. Having made these dispositions, he, at the head of about five of them, approached the house on the windy side, for the fiend possessed a coolness which enabled him to seize upon every possible advantage. That he had combustibles about him was evident, for in less than fifteen minutes nearly one-half of the house was enveloped in flames. On seeing this, the others rushed over to the spot where he and his gang were standing, and remonstrated earnestly, but in vain; the flames now burst forth with renewed violence, and as they flung their strong light upon the faces of the foremost group, I think hell itself could hardly present anything more Satanic than their countenances, now worked up into

a paroxysm of infernal triumph at their own revenge. The captain's look had lost all its calmness, every feature started out into distinct malignity, the curve in his brow was deep, and ran up to the root of the hair, dividing his face into two segments, that did not seem to have been designed for each other. His lips were half open, and the corners of his mouth a little brought back on each side, like those of a man expressing intense hatred and triumph over an enemy who is in the death struggle under his grasp. His eyes blazed from beneath his knit eyebrows with a fire that seemed to be lighted up in the infernal pit itself. It is unnecessary and only painful to describe the rest of his gang; demons might have been proud of such horrible visages as they exhibited: for they worked under all the power of hatred, revenge, and joy; and these passions blended into one terrible scowl, enough almost to blast any human eye that would venture to look upon it.

When the others attempted to intercede for the lives of the inmates, there were at least fifteen guns and pistols levelled at them.

"Another word," said the captain, "an' you're a corpse where you stand, or the first man who will dare to spake for them; no, no, it wasn't to spare them we came here. 'No mercy' is the password for the night, an' by the sacred oath I swore beyant in the chapel, anyone among yees that will attempt to show it will find none at my hand. Surround the house, boys, I tell ye, I hear them stirring. 'No quarther —no mercy,' is the ordher of the night."

Such was his command over these misguided creatures, that in an instant there was a ring round the house to prevent the escape of the unhappy inmates, should the raging element give them time to attempt it; for none present durst withdraw themselves from the scene, not only from an apprehension of the captain's present vengeance, or that of his gang, but because they knew that, even had they then escaped, an early and certain death awaited them from a quarter against which they had no means of defence. The hour now was about half-past two o'clock. Scarcely had the last words escaped from the captain's lips, when one of the windows of the house was broken, and a human head, having the hair in a blaze, was descried, apparently a woman's, if one might judge by the profusion of burning tresses, and the softness of the tones, notwithstanding that it called, or rather shrieked aloud, for help and mercy. The only reply to this was the whoop from the captain and his gang of "No mercy—no mercy!" and that instant the former and one of the latter rushed to the spot, and ere the action could be perceived the head was transfixed with a bayonet and a pike, both having entered it together. The word mercy was divided in her mouth; a short silence ensued; the head hung down on the window, but was instantly tossed back into the flames!

This action occasioned a cry of horror from all present, except the *gang* and their leader, which startled and enraged the latter so much that he ran towards one of them, and had his bayonet, now reeking with the blood of its innocent victim, raised to plunge it in his body, when, dropping the point, he said in a piercing whisper, that hissed in the ears of all, "It's no use *now*, you know; if one's to hang, all will

hang; so our safest way, you persave, is to lave none of them to tell the story. Ye *may* go now, if you wish; but it won't save a hair of your heads. You cowardly set! I knew if I had tould yees the sport, that none of yees, except my *own* boys, would come, so I jist played a thrick upon you; but remimber what you are sworn to, and stand to the oath ye tuck."

Unhappily, notwithstanding the wetness of the preceding weather. the materials of the house were extremely combustible; the whole dwelling was now one body of glowing flame, yet the shouts and shrieks within rose awfully above its crackling and the voice of the storm, for the wind once more blew in gusts and with great violence. The doors and windows were all torn open, and such of those within as had escaped the flames rushed towards them, for the purpose of further escape, and of claiming mercy at the hands of their destroyers; but whenever they appeared the unearthly cry of "NO MERCY" rung upon their ears for a moment, and for a moment only, for they were flung back at the points of the weapons which the demons had brought with them to make the work of vengeance more certain.

As yet there were many persons in the house whose cry for life was strong as despair, and who clung to it with all the awakened powers of reason and instinct. The ear of man could hear nothing so strongly calculated to stifle the demon of cruelty and revenge within him as the long and wailing shrieks which rose beyond the elements in tones that were carried off rapidly upon the blast, until they died away in the darkness that lay behind the surrounding hills. Had not the house been in a solitary situation, and the hour the dead of night, any person sleeping within a moderate distance must have heard them, for such a cry of sorrow rising into a yell of despair was almost sufficient to have awakened the dead. It was lost, however, upon the hearts and ears that heard it: to them, though in justice be it said, to only comparatively a few of them, it was as delightful as the tones of soft and entrancing music.

The claims of the surviving sufferers were now modified; they supplicated merely to suffer death *by the weapons of their enemies;* they were willing to bear that, provided they should be allowed to escape from the flames; but no—the horrors of the conflagration were calmly and malignantly gloried in by their merciless assassins, who deliberately flung them back into all their tortures. In the course of a few minutes a man appeared upon the side-wall of the house, nearly naked; his figure, as he stood against the sky in horrible relief, was so finished a picture of woe-begone agony and supplication that it is yet as distinct in my memory as if I were again present at the scene. Every muscle, now in motion by the powerful agitation of his sufferings, stood out upon his limbs and neck, giving him an appearance of desperate strength, to which by this time he must have been wrought up; the perspiration poured from his frame, and the veins and arteries of his neck were inflated to a surprising thickness. Every moment he looked down into the flames which were rising to where he stood; and as he looked the indescribable horror which

flitted over his features might have worked upon the devil himself to relent. His words were few.

"My child," said he, "is still safe; she is an infant, a young crathur that never harmed you nor anyone—she is still safe. Your mothers, your wives, have young innocent childhre like it. Oh, spare her; think for a moment that it's one of your own: spare it, as you hope to meet a just God, or if you don't, in mercy shoot me first—put an end to me before I see her burned!"

The captain approached him coolly and deliberately. "You'll prosecute no one now, you bloody informer," said he: "you'll convict no more boys for takin' an ould gun an' pistol from you, or for givin' you a neighbourly knock or two into the bargain."

Just then, from a window opposite him, proceeded the shrieks of a woman, who appeared at it with the infant in her arms. She herself was almost scorched to death; but, with the presence of mind and humanity of her sex, she was about to put the little babe out of the window. The captain noticed this, and, with characteristic atrocity, thrust, with a sharp bayonet, the little innocent, along with the person who endeavoured to rescue it, into the red flames, where they both perished. This was the work of an instant. Again he approached the man. "Your child is a coal now," said he, with deliberate mockery; "I pitched it in myself, on the point of this"—showing the weapon—"an' now is your turn"—saying which he clambered up, by the assistance of his gang, who stood with a front of pikes and bayonets bristling to receive the wretched man, should he attempt, in his despair, to throw himself from the wall. The captain got up, and placing the point of his bayonet against his shoulder, flung him into the fiery element that raged behind him. He uttered one wild and terrific cry as he fell back, and no more. After this nothing was heard but the crackling of the fire and the rushing of the blast: all that had possessed life within were consumed, amounting either to eleven or fifteen persons.

When this was accomplished, those who took an active part in the murder stood for some time about the conflagration; and as it threw its red light upon their fierce faces and rough persons, soiled as they now were with smoke and black streaks of ashes, the scene seemed to be changed to hell, the murderers to spirits of the damned, rejoicing over the arrival and the torture of some guilty soul. The faces of those who kept aloof from the slaughter were blanched to the whiteness of death: some of them fainted, and others were in such agitation that they were compelled to lean on their comrades. They became actually powerless with horror; yet to such a scene were they brought by the pernicious influence of Ribbonism.

It was only when the last victim went down that the conflagration shot up into the air with most unbounded fury. The house was large, deeply thatched, and well furnished; and the broad red pyramid rose up with fearful magnificence towards the sky. Abstractedly it had sublimity, but now it was associated with nothing in my mind but blood and terror. It was not, however, without a

purpose that the captain and his gang stood to contemplate its effect. "Boys," said he, "we had betther be sartin that all's safe; who knows but there might be some of the sarpents crouchin' under a hape o' rubbish, to come out an' gibbet us to-morrow or next day; we had betther wait awhile, anyhow, if it was only to see the blaze."

Just then the flames rose majestically to a surprising height. Our eyes followed their direction; and we perceived, for the first time, that the dark clouds above, together with the intermediate air, appeared to reflect back, or rather to have caught, the red hue of the fire. The hills and country about us appeared with an alarming distinctness; but the most picturesque part of it was the effect or reflection of the blaze on the floods that spread over the surrounding plains. These, in fact, appeared to be one broad mass of liquid copper, for the motion of the breaking waters caught from the blaze of the high waving column, as reflected in them, a glaring light, which eddied, and rose, and fluctuated as if the flood itself had been a lake of molten fire.

Fire, however, destroys rapidly. In a short time the flames sank—became weak and flickering—by-and-by they shot out only in fits—the crackling of the timbers died away—the surrounding darkness deepened—and, ere long, the faint light was overpowered by the thick volumes of smoke that rose from the ruins of the house and its murdered inhabitants.

"Now, boys," said the captain, "all is safe—we may go. Remember, every man of you, what you've sworn this night on the book an' altar of God—not on a heretic Bible. If you perjure yourselves, you may hang us; but let me tell you, for your comfort, that if you do there is them livin' that will take care the lase of your own lives will but short."

After this we dispersed every man to his own home.

Reader, not many months elapsed ere I saw the bodies of this captain, whose name was Patrick Devann, and all those who were actively concerned in the perpetration of this deed of horror, withering in the wind, where they hung gibbetted near the scene of their nefarious villainy; and while I inwardly thanked heaven for my own narrow and almost undeserved escape, I thought in my heart how seldom, even in this world, justice fails to overtake the murderer, and to enforce the righteous judgment of God—that "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."

This tale of terror is, unfortunately, too true. The scene of hellish murder detailed in it lies at Wildgoose Lodge, in the county of Louth, within about four miles of Carrickmacross, and nine of Dundalk. No such multitudinous murder has occurred, under similar circumstances, except the burning of the Sheas in the county of Tipperary. The name of the family burned in Wildgoose Lodge was Lynch. One of them had, shortly before this fatal night, prosecuted and convicted some of the neighbouring Ribbonmen, who visited him with severe marks of their displeasure in consequence of his having refused to enrol himself as a member of their body.

The language of the story is partly fictitious; but the facts are pretty closely such as were developed during the trial of the murderers. Both parties were Roman

Catholics. There were, if the author mistake not, either twenty-five or twenty-eight of those who took an active part in the burning hanged and gibbetted in different parts of the county of Louth. Devann, the ringleader, hung for some months in chains, within about a hundred yards of his own house, and about half a mile from Wildgoose Lodge. His mother could neither go into or out of her cabin without seeing his body swinging from the gibbet. Her usual exclamation on looking at him was, "God be good to the sowl of my poor marthyr!" The peasantry, too, frequently exclaimed, on seeing him, "Poor Paddy!" a gloomy fact that speaks volumes.

TRAITS AND STORIES

OF

THE IRISH PEASANTRY.

FOURTH SERIES.

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TUBBER DERG;

Or, The Red Well.

THE following story owes nothing to any colouring or invention of mine; it is unhappily a true one, and to me possesses a peculiar and melancholy interest, arising from my intimate knowledge of the man whose fate it holds up as a moral lesson to Irish landlords. I knew him well, and many a day and hour have I played about his knee, and ran, in my boyhood, round his path, when, as he said himself, the world was no trouble to him.

On the south side of a sloping tract of light ground, lively, warm, and productive, stood a white, moderate-sized farmhouse, which, in consequence of its conspicuous situation, was a prominent and, we may add, a graceful object in the landscape of which it formed a part. The spot whereon it stood was a swelling natural terrace, the soil of which was heavier and richer than that of the adjoining lands. On each side of the house stood a clump of old beeches, the only survivors of that species then remaining in the country. These beeches extended behind the house in a kind of angle, with opening enough at their termination to form a vista, through which its white walls glistened with beautiful effect in the calm splendour of a summer evening. Above the mound on which it stood rose two steep hills, overgrown with furze and fern, except on their tops, which were clothed with purple heath; they were also covered with patches of broom, and studded with grey rocks, which sometimes rose singly or in larger masses, pointed or rounded into curious and fantastic shapes. Exactly between these hills the sun went down during the month of June, and nothing could be in finer relief than the rocky and picturesque outlines of their sides, as, crowned with thorns and clumps of wild ash, they appeared to overhang the valley, whose green foliage was gilded by the sunbeams, which lit up the scene into radiant beauty. The bottom of this natural chasm, which opened against the deep crimson of the evening sky, was nearly upon a level with the house, and completely so with the beeches that surrounded it. Brightly did the sinking sun fall upon their tops, whilst the neat white house below, in their quiet shadow, sent up its wreath of smoke among their branches, itself an

emblem of contentment, industry, and innocence. It was, in fact, a lovely situation; perhaps the brighter to me that its remembrance is associated with days of happiness and freedom from the cares of a world which, like a distant mountain, darkens as we approach it, and only exhausts us in struggling to climb its rugged and barren paths.

There was to the south-west of this house another little hazel glen, that ended in a precipice formed by a single rock some thirty feet high, over which tumbled a crystal cascade into a basin worn in its hard bed below. From this basin the stream murmured away through the copse-wood, until it joined a larger rivulet that passed, with many a winding, through a fine extent of meadows adjoining it. Across the foot of this glen, and past the door of the house we have described, ran a bridle-road, from time immemorial, on which, as the traveller ascended it towards the house, he appeared to track his way in blood; for a chaly-beate *spa* arose at its head, oozing out of the earth, and spread itself in a crimson stream over the path in every spot whereon a footmark could be made. From this circumstance it was called Tubber Derg, or the Red Well. In the meadow where the glen terminated was another spring of delicious crystal; and clearly do I remember the ever-beaten pathway that led to it through the grass, and up the green field which rose in a gentle slope to the happy-looking house of Owen M'Carthy, for so was the man called who resided under its peaceful roof.

I will not crave your pardon, gentle reader, for dwelling at such length upon a scene so dear to my heart as this, because I write not now so much for your gratification as my own. Many an eve of gentle May have I pulled the Maygowans which grew about that well and over that smooth meadow. Often have I raised my voice to its shrillest pitch that I might hear its echoes rebounding in the bottom of the green and still glen, where silence, so to speak, was deepened by the continuous murmur of the cascade above; and when the cuckoo uttered her first note from among the hawthorns on its side, with what trembling anxiety did I, an urchin of some eight or nine years, look under my right foot for the white hair, whose charm was such that, by keeping it about me, the first female name I should hear was destined, I believed in my soul, to be that of my future wife. Sweet was the song of the thrush, and mellow the whistle of the blackbird, as they rose in the stillness of evening over the "birken shaws" and green dells of this secluded spot of rural beauty. Far, too, could the rich voice of Owen M'Carthy be heard along the hills and meadows, as, with a little chubby urchin at his knee and another in his arms, he sat on a bench beside his own door, singing the "Trougha" in his native Irish; whilst Kathleen his wife, with her two maids, each crooning a low song, sat before the door milking the cows, whose sweet breath mingled its perfume with the warm breeze of evening.

Owen M'Carthy was descended from a long line of honest ancestors, whose names had never, within the memory of man, been tarnished by the commission of a mean or disreputable action. They were always a kind-hearted family, but stern and proud in the common intercourse

of life. They believed themselves to be, and probably were, a branch of the MacCarthy More stock; and although only the possessors of a small farm, it was singular to observe the effect which this conviction produced upon their bearing and manners. To it might, perhaps, be attributed the high and stoical integrity for which they were remarkable. This severity, however, was no proof that they wanted feeling, or were insensible to the misery and sorrows of others: in all the little cares and perplexities which chequered the peaceful neighbourhood in which they lived they were ever the first to console, or, if necessary, to support a distressed neighhour with the means which God had placed in their possession; for, being industrious, they were seldom poor Their words were few but sincere, and generally promised less than the honest hearts that dictated them intended to perform. There is in some persons an hereditary feeling of just principle, the result neither of education nor of a clear moral sense, but rather a kind of instinctive honesty, which descends, like a constitutional bias, from father to son, pervading every member of the family. It is difficult to define this, or to assign its due position in the scale of human virtues. It exists in the midst of the grossest ignorance, and influences the character in the absence of better principles. Such was the impress which marked so strongly the family of which I speak. No one would ever think of imputing a dishonest act to the M'Carthys; nor would any person acquainted with them hesitate for a moment to consider their word as good as the bond of another. I do not mean to say, however, that their motives of action were not higher than this instinctive honesty; far from it: but I say that they possessed it *in addition* to a strong feeling of family pride and a correct knowledge of their moral duties.

I can only take up Owen M'Carthy at that part of the past to which my memory extends. He was then a tall, fine-looking young man; silent, but kind. One of the earliest events within my recollection is his wedding; after that the glimpses of his state and circumstances are imperfect; but as I grew up they became more connected, and I am able to remember him the father of four children; an industrious, inoffensive small farmer, beloved, respected, and honoured. No man could rise, be it ever so early, who would not find Owen up before him; no man could anticipate him in an early crop; and if a widow or a sick acquaintance were unable to get in their harvest, Owen was certain to collect the neighbours to assist them, to be the first there himself, with quiet benevolence, encouraging them to a zealous performance of the friendly task in which they were engaged.

It was, I believe, soon after his marriage, that the lease of the farm held by him expired. Until that time he had been able to live with perfect independence; but even the enormous rise of one pound per acre, though it deprived him in a great degree of his usual comforts, did not sink him below the bare necessaries of life. For some years after that he could still serve a deserving neighbour; and never was the hand of Owen M'Carthy held back from the wants and distresses of those whom he knew to be honest.

I remember once an occasion upon which a widow Murray applied to him for a loan of five pounds, to prevent her two cows from being auctioned for half a year's rent, of which she only wanted that sum. Owen sat at dinner with his family, when she entered the house in tears, and, as well as her agitation of mind permitted, gave him a detailed account of her embarrassment.

"The blessin' o' God be upon all here," said she, on entering.

"The double o' that to you, Rosha," replied Owen's wife: "won't you sit in an' be atin'?—here's a sate beside Nanny; come over, Rosha."

Owen only nodded to her, and continued to eat his dinner, as if he felt no interest in her distress. Rosha sat down at a distance, and with the corner of a red handkerchief to her eyes, shed tears in that bitterness of feeling which marks the helplessness of honest industry under the pressure of calamity.

"In the name o' goodness, Rosha," said Mrs. M'Carthy, "what ails you, asthore? Sure Jimmy—God spare him to you—wouldn't be dead?"

"Glory be to God! no, avourneen machree. Och, och! but it ud be the black sight, an' the black day, that ud see my brave boy, the staff of our support, an' the bread of our mouth, taken away from us. No, no, Kathleen, dear, it's not that bad wid me yet. I hope we'll never live to see his manly head laid down before us. 'Twas his own manliness, indeed, brought it an him—backin' the sack when he was bringin' home our last *meldhre* from the mill; for, you see, he should do it, the crathur, to show his strinth, an' the sack, when he got it an was too heavy for him, an' hurted the small of his back—for his bones, you see, are too young, an' hadn't time to fill up yet. No, avourneen. Glory be to God! he's gettin' betther wid me!" and the poor creature's eyes glistened with delight through her tears and the darkness of her affliction.

Without saying a word, Owen, when she finished the eulogium on her son, rose, and taking her forcibly by the shoulder, set her down at the table, on which a large pot-full of potatoes had been spread out, with a circle in the middle for a dish of rashers and eggs, into which dish every right hand of those about it was thrust, with a quickness that clearly illustrated the principle of competition as a stimulus to action.

"Spare your breath," said Owen, placing her rather roughly upon the seat, "an' take share of what's goin': when all's cleared off we'll hear you, but the sorra word till then."

"Musha, Owen," said the poor woman, "you're the same man still; sure we all know your ways; I'll strive, avourneen, to ate—I'll strive, asthore—to plase you, an' the Lord bless you an' yours, an' may you never be as I an' my fatherless childhre are this sorrowful day!"—and she accompanied her words by a flood of tears.

Owen, without evincing the slightest sympathy, withdrew himself from the table. Not a muscle of his face was moved; but as the cat came about his feet at the time, he put his foot under her, and flung her as easily as possible to the lower end of the kitchen.

"Arrah, what harm did the crathur do," asked his wife, "that you'd kick her for, that way? an' why but you *ate out* your dinner?"

"*I'm* done," he replied, rather gruffly, "but that's no rason that Rosha, an' you, an' thim boys that has the work afore them, shouldn't finish your male's mate."

Poor Rosha thought that by his withdrawing he had already suspected the object of her visit, and of course concluded that her chance of succeeding was very slender.

The wife, who guessed what she wanted, as well as the nature of her suspicion, being herself as affectionate and obliging as Owen, reverted to the subject, in order to give her an opportunity of proceeding.

"Somethin' bitther, an' out o' the common coorse, is a throuble to you, Rosha," said she, "or you wouldn't be in the state you're in. The Lord look down on you this day, you poor crathur—widout the father of your childhre to stand up for you, an' your only other depindence laid on the broad of his back, all as one as a cripple: but no matther, Rosha; trust to Him that can be a husband to you, an' a father to your orphans—trust to Him, an' his blessed mother in heaven, this day, an' never fear but they'll *rise* up a frind for you. Musha, Owen, ate your dinner as you ought to do, wid your capers! How can you take a spade in your hand upon that morsel?"

"Finish your own," said her husband, "an never heed me; jist let me alone. Don't you see that if I wanted it I'd ate it, an' what more would you have about it?"

"Well, acushla, it's your own loss, sure, of a sartinty. An', Rosha, whisper, ahagur, what can Owen or I do for you? Throth, it would be a bad day we'd see you at a *deshort* for a friend, for you never wor nothin' else nor a civil, oblagin' neighbour yourself; an' him that's gone before—the Lord make his bed in heaven this day—was as good a warrant as ever broke bread to sarve a friend, if it was at the hour of midnight."

"Ah! when I had *him*," exclaimed the distracted widow, "I never had occasion to throuble aither friend or neighbour; but he's gone, an' now it's otherwise wid me—glory be to God for all his mercies—a wurrah dheelish! Why, thin, since I must spake, an' has no other frind to go to—but somehow I doubt Owen looks dark upon me—sure I'd put my hand to a stamp, if my word wouldn't do for it, an' sign the blessed crass that saved us, for the payment of it; or I'd give it to him in oats, for I hear you want some, Owen—phatie oats it is, and a betther shouldhered or fuller-lookin' grain never went undher a harrow—indeed, it's it that's the beauty, all out, if it's good seed you want."

"What is it for, woman alive?" inquired Owen, as he kicked a three-legged stool out of his way.

"What is it for, is it? Och, Owen, darlin', sure my two brave cows is lavin' me. Paddy Dannellan, the driver, is over wid me beyant, an' has them ready to set off wid. I reared them both, the two of them, wid my own hands; *Cheehoney*, that knows my voice, an' would come to me from the fardest corner o' the field, is goin', an' nothin' will we

have—nothin' will my poor sick boy have—but the black wather, or the dhry salt; besides the butther of them bein' lost to us for the rent, or a small taste of it, of an odd time, for poor Jimmy. Owen, next to God, I have no friend to depind upon but yourself!"

"Me!" said Owen, as if astonished. "Phoo, that's quare enough! Now do you think, Rosha—hut, hut, woman alive? Come, boys, you're all done; out wid yees to your spades, an' finish that *meerin* before night. Me!—hut, hut!"

"I have it all but five pounds, Owen, an' for the sake of him that's in his grave—an' that, maybe, is able to put up his prayer for you ——"

"An' what would you want *me* to do, Rosha? Fitther for you to sit down an' finish your dinner, when it's before you. I'm goin' to get an ould glove[1] that's somewhere about this chist, for I must weed out that bit of oats before night, wid a blessin'," and as he spoke he passed into another room, as if he had altogether forgotten her solicitation, and in a few minutes returned.

"Owen, avick!—an' the blessin' of the fatherless be upon you, sure an' many a one o' them you have, anyhow, Owen!"

"Well, Rosha, well?"

"Och, och, Owen, it's low days wid me to be depindin' upon the sthranger? Little thim that reared me ever thought it ud come to this. You know I'm a dacent father's child, an' I have stooped to you, Owen M'Carthy—what I'd scorn to do to any other but yourself—poor an' friendless as I stand here before you. Let thim take the cows, thin, from my childhre: but the father of the fatherless will support thim an' me. Och, but it's well for the O'Donohoes that their landlord lives at home among themselves, for, may the heavens look down on me, I wouldn't know where to find mine, if one sight of him ud save me an' my childhre from the grave! The agent, even he lives in Dublin, an' how could I lave my sick boy an' small *girshas* by themselves, to go a hundre' miles, an' maybe not see him afther all. Little hopes I'd have from him, even if I did; he's paid for gatherin' in his rents; but it's well known he wants the touch of nathur for the sufferins of the poor, an' of them that's honest in their intintions."

"I'll go over wid you, Rosha, if that will be of any use," replied Owen, composedly; "come, I'll go an' spake to dirty Dannellan."

"The sorra blame I blame him, Owen," replied Rosha: "his bread's depindin' upon the likes of sich doins, an' he can't get over it; but a word from you, Owen, will save me, for who ever refused to take the word of a M'Carthy?"

When Owen and the widow arrived at the house of the latter, they found the situation of the bailiff laughable in the extreme. Her eldest son, who had been confined to his bed by a hurt received in his back, was up, and had got the unfortunate driver, who was rather old, wedged in between the dresser and the wall, where his cracked voice—for he was asthmatic—was raised to the highest pitch, calling for assistance. Beside him was a large tub half-filled with water, into

[1] In "hand-weeding," old gloves are used to prevent the hands from being injured by the thistles.

which the little ones were emptying small jugs, carried at the top of their speed from a puddle before the door. In the meantime, Jemmy was tugging at the bailiff with all his strength—fortunately for that personage it was but little—with the most sincere intention of inverting him into the tub, which contained as much muddy water as would have been sufficient to make him a subject for the deliberation of a coroner and twelve honest men. Nothing could be more conscientiously attempted than the task which Jemmy had proposed to execute; every tug brought out his utmost strength, and when he failed in pulling down the bailiff, he compensated himself for his want of success by cuffing his ribs, and peeling his shins by hard kicks; whilst from those open points which the driver's grapple with his man naturally exposed, were inflicted on him by the rejoicing urchins numberless punches of tongs, potato-washers, and sticks whose points were from time to time hastily thrust into the coals, that they might more effectually either blind or disable him in some other manner.

As one of the little ones ran out to fill his jug, he spied his mother and Owen approaching, on which, with the empty vessel in his hand, he flew towards them, his little features distorted by glee and ferocity, wildly mixed up together.

"Oh, mudher, mudher—ha, ha, ha!—don't come in yet; don't come in, Owen, till Jimmy, an' huz, an' the Denises, gets the bailey drownded. We'll soon have the *bot*[1] full; but Paddy an' Jack Denis have the eyes amost pucked out of him; an' Katty's takin' the hook from behind the *cuppel*, to get it about his neck."

Owen and the widow entered with all haste, precisely at the moment when Dannellan's head was dipped, for the first time, into the vessel.

"Is it goin' to murdher him yees are?" said Owen, as he seized Jemmy with a grasp that transferred him to the opposite end of the house. "Hould back, ye pack of young devils, an' let the man up. What did he come to do but his duty! I tell you, Jimmy, if you wor *at* yourself, an' in full strinth, that you'd have the man's blood on you where you stand, and would suffer as you ought to do for it."

"There let me," replied the lad, his eyes glowing, and his veins swollen with passion; "I don't care if I did. It would be no sin, an' no disgrace, to hang for the like of him; dacenter to do that than stale a creel of turf, or a wisp of straw, 'tanny rate."

In the meantime, the bailiff had raised his head out of the water, and presented a visage which it was impossible to view with gravity. The widow's anxiety prevented her from seeing it in a ludicrous light; but Owen's severe face assumed a grave smile as the man shook himself and attempted to comprehend the nature of his situation. The young urchins, who had fallen back at the appearance of Owen and the widow, now burst into a peal of mirth, in which, however, Jemmy whose fiercer passions had been roused, did not join.

"Paddy Dannellan," said the widow, "I take the mother of heaven to witness that it vexes my heart to see you get sich thratement in

[1] A tub.

my place; an' I wouldn't for the best cow in my byre that sich a *brieuliagh* happened. *Dher charp agus manim*,[1] Jimmy, but I'll make you suffer for drawin' down this upon my head, an' me had enough over it afore."

"I don't care," replied Jemmy; "whoever comes to take our property from us, an' us willin' to work, will suffer for it. Do you think I'd see thim crathurs at their dhry phatie, an' our cows standin' in a pound for no rason? No; high hangin' to me, but I'll split *to* the skull the first man that takes them; an' all I'm sorry for is that it's not the vagabone landlord himself that's near me. That's our thanks for payin' many a good pound in honesty an' dacency to him an' his; lavin' us to a schamin' agent, an' not even to that same, but to his undher-strappers, that's robbin' us on both sides between them. May hard fortune attind him for a landlord! You may tell him this, Dannellan—that his wisest plan is to keep clear of the counthry. Sure it's a gambler he is, they say, an' we must be harrished an' racked to support his villainy: but wait a bit; maybe there's a good time comin', when we'll pay our money to thim that won't be too proud to hear our complaints wid their own ears, an' who won't turn us over to a divil's limb of an agent. *He* had need, anyhow, to get his coffin sooner nor he thinks. What signifies hangin' in a good cause?" said he, as the tears of keen indignation burst from his glowing eyes. "It's a dacent death, an a happy death, when it's for the right," he added—for his mind was evidently fixed upon the contemplation of those means of redress which the habits of the country and the prejudices of the people present to them in the first moments of passion.

"It's well that Dannellan's one of ourselves," replied Owen, coolly, "otherwise, Jemmy, you said words that would lay you up by the heels. As for you, Dannellan, you must look over this. The boy's the son of dacent poor parents, an' it's a new thing for him to see the cows druv from the place. The poor fellow's vexed, too, that he has been so long laid up wid a sore back; an' so, you see, one thing or another has put him through other. Jimmy is warm-hearted, afther all, an' will be sorry for it when he cools, an' remimbers that *you* wor only doin' your duty."

"But what am I to do about the cows? Sure I can't go back widout either thim or the rint?" said Paddy, with a look of fear and trembling at Jemmy.

"The cows!" said another of the widow's sons, who then came in; "why, you dirty spalpeen of a rip, you may whistle on the wrong side o' your mouth for them. I *druv* them off of the estate; an' now take them, if you dar; it's conthrairy to law," said the urchin, "an' if you'd touch them, I'd make my mudher sarve you wid a *lattitat* or a *fiery-flashes*."

This was a triumph to the youngsters, who began to shake their little fists at him, and to exclaim in a chorus, "Ha, you dirty rip! wait till we get you out o' the house, an' if we don't put you from ever

[1] By my soul and body.

drivin' ! Why but you work like another ?—ha, you'll get it ! "—and every little fist was shook in vengeance at him.

"Whisht wid yees," said Jemmy to the little ones : "let him alone, he got enough. There's the cows for you ; an' keen may the curse o' the widow an' orphans light upon you, an' upon them that sent you, from first to last !—an' that's the *best* we wish you ! "

"Paddy," said Owen to the bailiff, "is there anyone in the town below that will take the rint, an' give a resate for it ? Do you think, man, that the neighbours of an honest, industrious woman ud see the cattle taken out of her byre for a thrifle ? Hut, tut ! no, man alive—no sich thing ! There's not a man in the parish, wid manes to do it, would see them taken away to be canted at only about a fourth part of their value. Hut, tut—no ! "

As the sterling fellow spoke, the cheeks of the widow were suffused with tears, and her son Jemmy's hollow eyes once more kindled, but with a far different expression from that which but a few minutes before flashed from them.

"Owen," said he, and utterance nearly failed him—"Owen, if *I* was well, it wouldn't be as it is wid us ; but—no, indeed, it would not : but —may God bless you for this ! Owen, never fear but you'll be paid : may God bless you, Owen ! "

As he spoke the hand of his humble benefactor was warmly grasped in his. A tear fell upon it : for with one of those quick and fervid transitions of feeling so peculiar to the people, he now felt a strong, generous emotion of gratitude, mingled, perhaps, with a sense of wounded pride on finding the poverty of their little family so openly exposed.

"Hut, tut, Jimmy, avick," said Owen, who understood his feelings, "phoo, man alive ! hut—hem ! Why, sure it's nothin', at all at all ; anybody would do it—only a bare five-an'-twenty shillins—[it was five pounds]—any neighbour—Mick Cassidy, Jack Moran, or Pether M'Cullagh—would do it. Come, Paddy, step out ; the money's to the fore. Rosha, put your cloak about you, and let us go down to the agint or clerk, or whatsomever he is—sure that makes no maxim any-how—I suppose he has power to give a resate. Jemmy, go to bed again, you're pale, poor bouchal ; and childhre, ye crathurs, ye, the cows won't be taken from yees this bout. Come, in the name of God, let us go, and see everything rightified at once—hut, tut—come."

Many similar details of Owen M'Carthy's useful life could be given, in which he bore an equally benevolent and Christian part. Poor fellow ! he was, ere long, brought low ; but to the credit of our peasantry, much as is said about their barbarity, he was treated, when helpless, with gratitude, pity, and kindness.

Until the peace of 1814, Owen's regular and systematic industry enabled him to struggle successfully against a weighty rent and sudden depression in the price of agricultural produce ; that is, he was able, by the unremitting toil of a man remarkable alike for an unbending spirit and a vigorous frame of body, to pay his rent with tolerable regularity. It is true a change began to be visible in his personal

appearance, in his farm, in the dress of his children, and in the economy of his household. Improvements, which adequate capital would have enabled him to effect, were left either altogether unattempted, or in an imperfect state resembling neglect, though, in reality, the result of poverty. His dress at mass, and in fairs and markets, had, by degrees, lost that air of comfort and warmth which bespeaks the independent farmer. The evidences of embarrassment began to disclose themselves in many small points, inconsiderable, it is true, but not the less significant. His house, in the progress of his declining circumstances, ceased to be annually ornamented by a new coat of whitewash; it soon assumed a faded and yellowish hue, and sparkled not in the setting sun as in the days of Owen's prosperity. It had, in fact, a wasted, unthriving look, like its master; the thatch became black and rotten upon its roof, the chimneys sloped to opposite points, the windows were less neat, and ultimately, when broken, were patched with a couple of leaves from the children's blotted copy-books. His outhouses also began to fail; the neatness of his little farmyard, and the cleanliness which marked so conspicuously the space fronting his dwellinghouse, disappeared in the course of time. Filth began to accumulate where no filth had been; his garden was not now planted so early, nor with such taste and neatness as before; his crops were later and less abundant; his haggards neither so full nor so trim as they were wont to be, nor his ditches and enclosures kept in such good repair. His cars, ploughs, and other farming implements, instead of being put under cover, were left exposed to the influence of wind and weather, where they soon became crazy and useless.

Such, however, were only the slighter symptoms of his bootless struggle against the general embarrassment into which the agricultural interests were, year after year, so unhappily sinking.

Had the tendency to general distress among the class to which he belonged become stationary, Owen would have continued by toil and incessant exertion to maintain his ground; but, unfortunately, there was no point at which the national depression could then stop. Year after year produced deeper, more extensive, and more complicated misery; and when he hoped that every succeeding season would bring an improvement in the market, he was destined to experience not merely a fresh disappointment, but an unexpected depreciation in the price of his corn, butter, and other disposable commodities.

When a nation is reduced to such a state, no eye but that of God himself can see the appalling wretchedness to which a year of disease and scarcity strikes down the poor and working classes.

Owen, after a long and noble contest for nearly three years, sank, at length, under the united calamities of disease and scarcity. The father of the family was laid low upon the bed of sickness, and those of his little ones who escaped it were almost consumed by famine. This twofold shock sealed his ruin; his honest heart was crushed—his hardy frame shorn of its strength, and he, to whom every neighbour fled as to a friend, now required friendship at a moment when the wide-spread poverty of the country rendered its assistance hopeless.

On rising from his bed of sickness, the prospect before him required his utmost fortitude to bear. He was now wasted in energy both of mind and body, reduced to utter poverty, with a large family of children too young to assist him, without means of retrieving his circumstances, his wife and himself gaunt skeletons, his farm neglected, his house wrecked, and his offices falling to ruin, yet every day bringing the half year's term nearer! Oh, ye who riot on the miseries of such men —ye who roll round the easy circle of fashionable life—think upon this picture! Ye vile and heartless landlords, who see not, hear not, know not those to whose heart-breaking toil ye owe the only merit ye possess —that of rank in society—come and contemplate this virtuous man, as unfriended, unassisted, and uncheered by those who are bound by a strong moral duty to protect and aid him, he looks shuddering into the dark, cheerless future! Is it to be wondered at that he, and such as he, should, in the misery of his despair, join the nightly meetings, be lured to associate himself with the incendiary, or seduced to grasp, in the stupid apathy of wretchedness, the weapon of the murderer? By neglecting the people, by draining them, with merciless rapacity, of the means of life, by goading them on under a cruel system of rack rents, ye become not their natural benefactors, but curses and scourges, nearly as much in reality as ye are in their opinion.

When Owen rose, he was driven by hunger, direct and immediate, to sell his best cow; and having purchased some oatmeal, at an enormous price, from a well-known devotee in the parish, who hoarded up this commodity for a "dear summer," he laid his plans for the future with as much judgment as any man could display. One morning after breakfast he addressed his wife as follows :—

"Kathleen, mavourneen, I want to consult wid you about what we ought to do; things are low wid us, asthore; and except our heavenly Father puts it into the heart of them I'm goin' to mention, I don't know what we'll do, nor what 'ill become of these poor crathurs that's naked and hungry about us. God pity them, they don't know—and maybe that same's some comfort—the hardships that's before them. Poor crathurs, see how quiet and sorrowful they sit about their little play, passin' the time for themselves as well as they can! Alley, acushla machree, come over to me. Your hair is bright and fair, Alley, and curls so purtily that the finest lady in the land might envy it, but, acushla, your colour's gone, your little hands are wasted away too; that sickness was hard and sore upon you, *a colleen machree*, and he that ud spend his heart's blood for you, darlin', can do nothin' to help you!"

He looked at the child as he spoke, and a slight motion in the muscles of his face was barely perceptible, but it passed away; and, after kissing her, he proceeded :—

"Ay, ye crathurs—you and I, Kathleen, could earn our bread for ourselves yet, but these can't do it. This last stroke, darlin', has laid us at the door of both poverty and sickness, but, blessed be the mother of heaven for it, they are all left wid us; and sure that's a blessin' we've to be thankful for—glory be to God!"

"Ay, poor things, it's well to have them spared, Owen, dear; sure I'd rather a thousand times beg from door to door, and have my childher to look at, than be in comfort widout them."

"Beg—that ud go hard wid me, Kathleen. I'd work—I'd live on next to nothing all the year round—but to see the crathurs that wor dacently bred up brought to that—I couldn't bear it, Kathleen—'twould break the heart widin me. Poor as they are, they have the blood of kings in their veins; and besides, to see a M'Carthy beggin' his bread in the counthry where his name was once great. The M'Carthy More, that was their title. No, acushla; I love them as I do the blood in my own veins; but I'd rather see them in the arms of God in heaven, laid down dacently, with their little sorrowful faces washed, and their little bodies stretched out purtily before my eyes—I would—in the graveyard there beyant, where all belonging to me lie, than have it cast up to them, or have it said, that ever a M'Carthy was seen beggin' on the highway."

"But, Owen, can you strike out no plan for us that ud put us in the way of comin' round agin? These poor ones, if we could hould out for two or three year, would soon be able to help us."

"They would—they would. I'm thinkin' this day or two of a plan: but I'm doubtful whether it ud come to anything."

"What is it, acushla? Sure we can't be worse nor we are, anyway."

"I'm goin' to go to Dublin. I'm tould that the landlord's come home from France and that he's there now; and if I didn't see him, sure I could see the agent. Now, Kathleen, my intintion ud be to lay our case before the head landlord himself, in hopes he might hould back his hand, and spare us for a while. If I had a line from the agent, or a scrape of a pen that I could show at home to some of the nabours, who knows but I could borry what ud set us up agin. I think many of them ud be sorry to see me turned out; eh, Kathleen?"

The Irish are an imaginative people: indeed, too much so for either their individual or national happiness. And it is this and superstition, which also depends much upon imagination, that makes them so easily influenced by those extravagant dreams that are held out to them by persons who understand their character.

When Kathleen heard the plan on which Owen founded his expectations of assistance, her dark, melancholy eye flashed with a portion of its former fire; a transient vivacity lit up her sickly features, and she turned a smile of hope and affection upon her children, then upon Owen.

"Arrah, thin, who knows, indeed!—who knows but he might do something for us? And maybe we might be as well as ever yet! May the Lord put it into his heart this day! I declare, ay!—maybe it was God put it into *your* heart, Owen!"

"I'll set off," replied her husband, who was a man of decision—"I'll set off on other morrow mornin'; and as nobody knows anything about it, so let there not be a word said upon the subject, good or bad.

If I have success, well and good ; but if not, why nobody need be the wiser."

The heart-broken wife evinced, for the remainder of the day, a lightness of spirits which she had not felt for many a month before. Even Owen was less depressed than usual, and employed himself in making such arrangements as he knew would occasion his family to feel the inconvenience of his absence less acutely. But as the hour of his departure drew nigh, a sorrowful feeling of affection, rising into greater strength and tenderness, threw a melancholy gloom around his hearth. According to their simple view of distance, a journey to Dublin was a serious undertaking, and to them it was such. Owen was in weak health, just risen out of illness, and what was more trying than any other consideration was that since their marriage they had never been separated before.

On the morning of his departure he was up before daybreak, and so were his wife and children, for the latter had heard the conversation already detailed between them, and, with their simple-minded parents, enjoyed the gleam of hope which it presented ; but this soon changed—when he was preparing to go an indefinite sense of fear, and a more vivid clinging of affection, marked their feelings. He himself partook of this, and was silent, depressed, and less ardent than when the speculation first presented itself to his mind. His resolution, however, was taken, and should he fail, no blame at a future time could be attached to himself. It was the last effort ; and to neglect it, he thought, would have been to neglect his duty. When breakfast was ready, they all sat down in silence ; the hour was yet early, and a rushlight was placed in a wooden candlestick that stood beside them to afford light. There was something solemn and touching in the group as they sat in dim relief, every face marked by the traces of sickness, want, sorrow, and affection. The father attempted to eat, but he could not ; Kathleen sat at the meal, but could taste nothing ; the children eat, for hunger at the moment was predominant over every other sensation. At length it was over, and Owen rose to depart ; he stood for a minute on the floor, and seemed to take a survey of his cold, cheerless house, and then of his family ; he cleared his throat several times, but did not speak.

" Kathleen," said he, at length, " in the name of God, I'll go ; and may his blessin' be about you, asthore machree, and guard you and these darlins till I come back to yees."

Kathleen's faithful heart could bear no more ; she laid herself on his bosom—clung to his neck—and, as the parting kiss was given, she wept aloud, and Owen's tears fell silently down his worn cheeks. The children crowded about them in loud wailings, and the grief of this virtuous and afflicted family was of that profound description which is ever the companion, in such scenes, of pure and genuine love.

" Owen !" she exclaimed—" Owen, *a-suilish mahuil agus machree !*[1]

[1] Light of my eyes and of my heart.

I doubt we wor wrong in thinkin' of this journey. How can you, mavourneen, walk all the way to Dublin, and you so worn and weakly wid that sickness, and the bad feedin' both before and since? Och, give it up, achree, and stay wid us—let what will happen. You're not able for sich a journey, indeed, you're not. Stay wid me and the childher, Owen; sure we'd be so lonesome widout you—will you, agrah? and the Lord will do for us some other way, maybe."

Owen pressed his faithful wife to his heart, and kissed her chaste lips with a tenderness which the heartless votaries of fashionable life can never know.

"Kathleen, asthore," he replied, in those terms of endearment which flow so tenderly through the language of the people—"sure whin I remimber your fair young face—your yellow hair, and the light that was in your eyes, acushla machree—but that's gone long ago—och, don't ax me to stop. Isn't your lightsome laugh, whin you wor young, in my ears? and your step that ud not bend the flower of the field—Kathleen, I can't, indeed I can't, bear to think of what you wor, nor of what you are now, when, in the coorse of age and natur, but a small change ought to be upon you! Sure I ought to make every struggle to take you and these sorrowful crathurs out of the state you're in."

The children flocked about them, and joined their entreaties to those of their mother. "Father, don't lave us—we'll be lonesome if you go; and if my mother ud get unwell, who'd be to take care of her? Father, don't lave your own 'weeny crathurs' (a pet name he had for them)—maybe the meal ud be eat out before you'd come back; or maybe something ud happen you in that strange place."

"Indeed, there's truth in what they say, Owen," said the wife; "do be said by your own Kathleen for this time, and don't take sich a long journey upon you. Afther all, maybe, you wouldn't see him—sure the nabours will help us, if you could only humble yourself to ax them!"

"Kathleen," said Owen, "when this is past you'll be glad I went—indeed, you will; sure it's only the tindher feelin' of your hearts, darlins. Who knows what the landlord may do when I see himself, and show him these resates—every penny paid him by our own family. Let me go, acushla; it *does* cut me to the heart to lave yees the way yees are in, even for a while; but it's far worse to see your poor wasted faces, widout havin' it in my power to do anything for yees."

He then kissed them again, one by one; and pressing the affectionate partner of his sorrows to his breaking heart, he bade God bless them, and set out in the twilight of a bitter March morning. He had not gone many yards from the door when little Alley ran after him in tears; he felt her hand upon the skirts of his coat, which she plucked with a smile of affection that neither tears nor sorrow could repress. "Father, kiss *me* again," said she. He stooped down and kissed her tenderly. The child then ascended a green ditch, and Owen, as he looked back, saw her standing upon it; her

fair tresses were tossed by the blast about her face, as with straining eyes she watched him receding from her view. Kathleen and the other children stood at the door, and also with deep sorrow watched his form, until the angle of the bridle road rendered him no longer visible; after which they returned slowly to the fire and wept bitterly.

We believe no men are capable of bearing greater toil or privation than the Irish. Owen's *viaticum* was only two or three oaten cakes tied in a little handkerchief, and a few shillings in silver to pay for his bed. With this small stock of food and money, an oaken stick in his hand, and his wife's kerchief tied about his waist, he undertook a journey of one hundred and eighty miles in quest of a landlord who, so far from being acquainted with the distresses of his tenantry, scarcely knew even their names, and not one of them in person.

Our scene now changes to the metropolis. One evening, about half-past six o'clock, a toil-worn man turned his steps to a splendid mansion in Mountjoy Square; his appearance was drooping, fatigued, and feeble. As he went along, he examined the numbers on the respective doors, until he reached *one*—before which he stopped for a moment; he then stepped out upon the street, and looked through the windows, as if willing to ascertain whether there was any chance of his object being attained. Whilst in this situation a carriage rolled rapidly up, and stopped with a sudden check that nearly threw the horses on their haunches. In an instant the thundering knock of the servant intimated the arrival of some person of rank; the hall-door was opened, and Owen, availing himself of that opportunity, entered the hall. Such a visitor, however, was too remarkable to escape notice. The hand of the menial was rudely placed against his breast, and as the usual impertinent interrogatories were put to him, the pampered ruffian kept pushing him back, until the afflicted man stood upon the upper step leading to the door.

"For the sake of God, let me spake but two words to him. I'm his tenant; and I know he's too much of a gintleman to turn away a man that has lived upon his honour's estate—father and son—for upwards of two hundre years. My name's Owen ——"

"You can't see him, my good fellow, at this hour. Go to Mr. M—— his agent: we have company to dinner. He never speaks to a tenant on business; his agent manages all that. Please leave the way; here's more company."

As he uttered the last word he pushed Owen back, who, forgetting that the stairs were behind him, fell, received a severe cut, and was so completely stunned that he lay senseless and bleeding. Another carriage drove up, as the fellow, now much alarmed, attempted to raise him from the steps, and, by order of the gentleman who came in it, he was brought into the hall. The circumstance now made some noise. It was whispered about that one of Mr. ——'s tenants, a drunken fellow from the country, wanted to break in forcibly to see him; but then it was also asserted that his skull was broken, and that he lay dead in the hall. Several of the gentlemen above stairs, on hearing that a man had been killed, immediately assembled about him, and

by the means of restoratives he soon recovered, though the blood streamed copiously from the wound in the back of his head.

"Who are you, my good man?" said Mr. S——

Owen looked about him rather vacantly, but soon collected himself, and replied in a mournful and touching tone of voice, "I'm one of your honour's tenants from Tubber Derg. My name is Owen M'Carthy your honour—that is, if you be Mr. ——."

"And pray what brought you to town, M'Carthy?"

"I wanted to make an humble appale to your honour's feelins, in regard of my bit of farm. I and my poor family, your honour, have been broken down by hard times and the sickness of the sason—God knows how *they* are."

"If you wish to speak to me about that, my good man, you must know I refer all these matters to my agent—go to him: he knows them best; and whatever is right and proper to be done for you, he will do it. Sinclair, give him a crown, and send him to the —— Dispensary to get his head dressed. I say, Carthy, go to my agent; he knows whether your claim is just or not, and will attend to it accordingly."

"'Plase your honour, I've been wid him, and he says he can do nothin' whatsomever for me. I went two or three times, and couldn't see him, he was so busy; and when I did get a word or two wid him, he tould me there was more offered for my land than I'm payin'; and that if I did not pay up, I must be put out—God help me!"

"But I tell you, Carthy, I never interfere between him and my tenants."

"Och, indeed, and it would be well both for your honour's tenants and yourself if you did, sir. Your honour ought to know, sir, more about us, and how we're thrated. I'm an honest man, sir, and I tell you so for your good."

"And pray, sir," said the agent, stepping forward, for he had arrived a few minutes before, and heard the last observation of M'Carthy—"pray, how are they treated, you that know so well, and are so honest a man? As for honesty, you might have referred to me for that, I think," he added.

"Mr. M——," said Owen, "we're thrated very badly. Sir, you needn't look at me, for I'm not afeerd to spake the thruth; no bullyin,' sir, will make me say anything in your favour that you don't desarve. You've broken the half of them by severity: you've turned the tenants aginst yourself and his honour here; and I tell you now, though you're to the fore, that, in the coorse of a short time, there'll be bad work upon the estate, except his honour, here, looks into his own affairs, and hears the complaints of the people. Look at these resates, yer honour, they'll show you, sir ——"

"Carthy, I can hear no such language against the gentleman to whom I entrust the management of my property; of course I refer the matter solely to him; I can do nothing in it."

"Kathleen, avourneen!" exclaimed the poor man, as he looked up despairingly to heaven—"and ye, poor darlins of my heart! Is this

the news I'm to have for yees whin I go home? As you hope for mercy, sir, don't turn away your ear from my petition, that I'd humbly make to *yourself.* Cowld, and hunger, and hardship are at home before me, yer honour. If you'd be plased to look at these resates, you'd see that I always paid my rent, and 'twas sickness and hard times——."

"And your own honesty, industry, and good conduct," said the agent, giving a dark and malignant sneer at him. "Carthy, it shall be my business to see that you do not spread a bad spirit through the tenantry much longer. Sir, you have heard the fellow's admission. It is an implied threat that he will give us much serious trouble. There is not such another incendiary on your property—not one, upon my honour."

"Sir," said a servant, "dinner is on the table."

"Sinclair," said his landlord, "give him another crown, and tell him to trouble me no more." Saying which, he and the agent went up to the drawing-room, and, in a moment, Owen saw a large party sweep down stairs, full of glee and vivacity, by whom both himself and his distresses were as completely forgotten as if they had never existed.

He now slowly departed, and knew not whether the house steward had given him money or not until he felt it in his hand. A cold, sorrowful weight lay upon his heart; the din of the town deadened his affliction into a stupor; but an overwhelming sense of his disappointment and a conviction of the agent's diabolical falsehood entered like barbed arrows into his heart.

On leaving the steps he looked up to heaven in the distraction of his agonizing thoughts; the clouds were black and lowering, the wind stormy, and as it carried them on its dark wing along the sky, he wished, if it were the will of God, that his head lay in the quiet graveyard where the ashes of his forefathers reposed in peace. But he again remembered his Kathleen and their children, and the large tears of anguish, deep and bitter, rolled slowly down his cheeks.

We will not trace him into an hospital, whither the wound on his head occasioned him to be sent, but simply state that, on the second week after this, a man with his head bound in a handkerchief, lame, bent, and evidently labouring under severe illness or great affliction, might be seen toiling slowly up the little hill that commanded a view of Tubber Derg. On reaching the top, he sat down to rest for a few minutes, but his eye was eagerly turned to the house which contained all that was dear to him on this earth. The sun was setting, and shone with half his disk visible, in that dim and cheerless splendour which produces almost in every temperament a feeling of melancholy. His house, which in happier days formed so beautiful and conspicuous an object in the view, was now, from the darkness of its walls, scarcely discernible. The position of the sun, too, rendered it more difficult to be seen, and Owen, for it was he, shaded his eyes with his hand, to survey it more distinctly. Many a harrowing thought and remembrance passed through his mind as his eye traced its dim outline in the fading light. He had done his duty—he had gone to the

fountain head, with a hope that his simple story of affliction might be heard. But all was fruitless: the only gleam of hope that opened upon their misery had now passed into darkness and despair for ever. He pressed his aching forehead with distraction as he thought of this; then clasped his hands bitterly, and groaned aloud.

At length he rose, and proceeded with great difficulty, for the short rest had stiffened his weak and fatigued joints. As he approached home his heart sank; and as he ascended the blood-red stream which covered the bridle way that led to his house, what with fatigue and affliction, his agitation weakened him so much that he stopped and leaned on his staff several times, that he might take breath.

"It's too dark, may be, for them to see me, or poor Kathleen would send the darlins to give me the *she dha veha*.[1] Kathleen, avourneen machree, how my heart beats wid long to see you, asthore, and to see the weeny crathurs—glory be to Him that has left *them* to me—praise and glory to His name!"

He was now within a few perches of the door; but a sudden misgiving shot across his heart when he saw it shut, and no appearance of smoke from the chimney, nor of stir or life about the house. He advanced.

"Mother of glory, what's this!—but, wait, let me rap again. Kathleen—Kathleen—are you widin, avourneen? Owen—Alley—arn't yees widin, childhre? Alley, sure I'm come back to yees all!" and he rapped more loudly than before. A dark breeze swept through the bushes as he spoke, but no voice nor sound proceeded from the house; all was still as death within. "Alley!" he called once more to his little favourite, "I'm come home wid something for you, asthore. I didn't forget *you*, alanna—I brought it from Dublin all the way—Alley!" but the gloomy murmur of the blast was the only reply.

Perhaps the most intense of all that he knew as misery was that which he then felt; but this state of suspense was soon terminated by the appearance of a neighbour who was passing.

"Why, thin, Owen, but yer welcome home agin, my poor fellow; and I'm sorry that I haven't betther news for you, and so are all of us."

He whom he addressed had almost lost the power of speech.

"Frank," said he, and he wrung his hand. "What—what? was death among them? for the sake of heaven, spake!"

The severe pressure which he received in return ran like a shock of paralysis to his heart. "Owen, you must be a man; everyone pities yees, and may the Almighty pity and suppport yees! She is, indeed, Owen, gone; the weeny fair-haired child, your favourite Alley, is gone. Yestherday she was berrid; and dacently the nabours attinded the place, and sent in, as far as they had it, both mate and dhrink to Kathleen and the other ones. Now, Owen, you've heard it; trust in God, an' be a man."

A deep and convulsive throe shook him to the heart. "Gone!—the fair-haired one!—Alley!—Alley!—the pride of both our hearts; the

[1] The welcome.

sweet, the quiet, and the sorrowful child, that seldom played wid the rest, but kept wid mys——! Oh, my darlin', my darlin'! gone from my eyes for ever! God of glory! won't you support me this night of sorrow and misery!" With a sudden yet profound sense of humility, he dropped on his knees at the threshold, and as the tears rolled down his convulsed cheeks, exclaimed, in a burst of sublime piety not at all uncommon amongst our peasantry, "I thank you, O my God! I thank you, an' I put myself an' my weeny ones, my *pastchee boght*, into your hands. I thank you, O God, for what has happened! Keep me up and support me—och, I want it! You loved the weeny one, and you took her; she was the light of my eyes, and the pulse of my broken heart; but you took her, blessed Father of heaven! an' we can't be angry wid you for so doin'. Still, if you had spared *her*—if—if—oh, blessed Father, my heart was *in* the *very* one you took—but I thank you, O God! May she rest in pace, now and for ever, Amin!"

He then rose up, and, slowly wiping the tears from his eyes, departed.

"Let me hould your arm, Frank, dear," said he. "I am weak and tired wid a long journey. Och, and can it be that she's gone—the fair-haired colleen! When I was lavin' home, an' had kissed them all—'twas the first time we ever parted, Kathleen and I, since our marriage—the blessed child came over an' held up her mouth, sayin', 'Kiss *me* agin, father!' and this was afther herself an' all of them had kissed me afore. But och, oh! Blessed Mother, Frank, where's my Kathleen and the rest?—and why are they out of their own place?"

"Owen, I tould you awhile agone that you must be a man. I gave you the worst news first, an' what's to come doesn't signify much. It was too dear; for if any man could live upon it you could—you have neither house nor home, Owen, nor land. An ordher came from the agint, your last cow was taken, so was all you had in the world—hem—barrin' a thrifle. No, bad manners to it—no, you're not widout a home, anyway—the family's in my barn, brave and comfortable, compared to what your own house was, that let in the wather through the roof like a sieve; and while the same barn's to the fore, never say you want a home."

"God bless you, Frank, for that goodness to them and me. If you're not rewarded for it here, you will be in a betther place. Och, I long to see Kathleen and the childher! But I'm fairly broken down, Frank, and hardly able to mark the ground; and, indeed, no wondher, if you knew but all; still, let God's will be done! Poor Kathleen, I must bear up afore her, or she'll break her heart, for I know how she loved the goolden-haired darlin' that's gone from us. Och, and how did she go, Frank, for I left her betther?"

"Why, the poor girsha took a relapse, and wasn't strong enough to bear up aginst the last attack; but it's one comfort that you know she's happy."

Owen stood for a moment, and looking solemnly in his neighbour's face, exclaimed, in a deep and exhausted voice, "Frank!"

"What are you goin' to say, Owen?"

"The heart widin me's broke—broke!"

The large tears rolled down his weather-beaten cheeks, and he proceeded in silence to the house of his friend. There was, however, a feeling of sorrow in his words and manner which Frank could not withstand. He grasped Owen's hand, and, in a low and broken voice, simply said, "Keep your spirits up—keep them up."

When they came to the barn in which his helpless family had taken up their temporary residence, Owen stood for a moment to collect himself; but he was nervous, and trembled with repressed emotion. They then entered; and Kathleen, on seeing her beloved and affectionate husband, threw herself on his bosom, and for some time felt neither joy nor sorrow—she had swooned. The poor man embraced her with a tenderness at once mournful and deep. The children, on seeing their father safely returned, forgot their recent grief, and clung about him with gladness and delight. In the meantime Kathleen recovered, and Owen for many minutes could not check the loud and clamorous grief—now revived by the presence of her husband—with which the heart-broken and emaciated mother deplored her departed child; and Owen himself, on once more looking among the little ones—on seeing her little frock hanging up, and her stool vacant by the fire—on missing her voice and her blue, laughing eyes, and remembering the affectionate manner in which, as with a presentiment of death, she held up her little mouth and offered him the last kiss—he slowly pulled the toys and cakes he had purchased for her out of his pocket, surveyed them for a moment, and then, putting his hands on his face, bent his head upon his bosom and wept with the vehement outpouring of a father's sorrow.

The reader perceives that he was a meek man, that his passions were not dark nor violent; he bore no revenge to those who neglected or injured him; and in this he differed from too many of his countrymen. No; his spirit was broken down with sorrow, and had not room for the fiercer and more destructive passions. His case excited general pity. Whatever his neighbours could do to soothe him and alleviate his affliction was done. His farm was not taken; for fearful threats were held out against those who might venture to occupy it. In these threats he had nothing to do; on the contrary, he strongly deprecated them. Their existence, however, was deemed by the agent sufficient to justify him in his callous and malignant severity towards him.

We did not write this story for effect. Our object was to relate facts that occurred. In Ireland there is much blame justly attached to landlords for their neglect and severity, in such depressed times, towards their tenants. There is also much that is not only indefensible but atrocious on the part of the tenants. But can the landed proprietors of Ireland plead ignorance or want of education for their neglect and rapacity? whilst the crimes of the tenants, on the contrary, may in general be ascribed to both. He who lives, as perhaps his forefathers have done, upon any man's property, and fails from unavoidable calamity, has as just and clear a right to assistance from

the landlord as if the amount of that aid were a bonded debt. Common policy, common sense, and common justice should induce the Irish landlords to lower their rents according to the market for agricultural produce; otherwise poverty, famine, crime, and vague political speculations, founded upon idle hopes of a general transfer of property, will spread over and convulse the kingdom. Any man who looks into our poverty may see that our landlords ought to reduce their rents to a standard suitable to the times and to the ability of the tenant.

But to return. Owen, for another year, struggled on for his family without success; his firm spirit *was* broken; employment he could not get, and even had it been regular, he would have found it impracticable to support his helpless wife and children by his labour. The next year unhappily was also one of sickness and of want; the country was not only a wide waste of poverty, but overspread with typhus fever. One Saturday night he and the family found themselves without food; they had not tasted a morsel for twenty-four hours. There were murmurings and tears, and, finally, a low conversation among them, as if they held a conference upon some subject which filled them with both grief and satisfaction. In this alternation of feeling did they pass the time until the sharp gnawing of hunger was relieved by sleep. A keen December wind blew with a bitter blast on the following morning; the rain was borne along upon it with violence, and the cold was chill and piercing. Owen, his wife, and their six children issued at daybreak out of the barn in which, ever since their removal from Tubber Derg, they had lived until then; their miserable fragments of bed-clothes were tied in a bundle to keep them dry; their pace was slow, need we say sorrowful; all were in tears. Owen and Kathleen went first, with a child upon the back, and another in the hand, of each. Their route lay by their former dwelling, the door of which was open, for it had not been inhabited. On passing it they stood a moment; then with a simultaneous impulse both approached—entered—and took one last look of a spot to which their hearts clung with enduring attachment. They then returned; and as they passed, Owen put forth his hand, picked a few small pebbles out of the wall, and put them in his pocket.

"Farewell!" said he, "and may the blessin' of God rest upon you! We now lave you for ever! We're goin' at last to beg our bread through the world wide, where none will know of the happy days we passed widin your walls! We *must* lave you; but glory be to the Almighty, we are goin' wid a clear conscience; we took no revenge into our own hands, but left everything to God above us. We are poor, but there is neither blood, nor murder, nor dishonesty upon our heads. Don't cry, Kathleen—don't cry, childher; there is still a good God above, who can and may do something for us *yet*, glory be to his name!"

He then passed on with his family, which, including himself, made, in all, eight paupers, being an additional burden upon the country which might easily have been avoided. His land was about two

years waste, and when it was ultimately taken the house was a ruin, and the money allowed by the landlord for building a new one, together with the loss of two years' rent, would, if humanely directed, have enabled Owen M'Carthy to remain a solvent tenant.

When an Irish peasant is reduced to pauperism he seldom commences the melancholy task of soliciting alms in his native place. The trial is always a severe one, and he is anxious to hide his shame and misery from the eyes of those who know him. This is one reason why some system of poor-laws should be introduced into the country. Paupers of this description become a burden upon strangers, whilst those who are capable of entering with friendly sympathy into their misfortunes have no opportunity of assisting them. Indeed, this shame of seeking alms from those who have known the mendicant in better days is a proof that the absence of poor laws takes away from the poorer classes one of the strongest incitements to industry; for instance, if every pauper in Ireland were confined to his own parish, and compelled to beg from his acquaintances, the sense of shame alone would, by stirring them up to greater industry, reduce the number of mendicants one half. There is a strong spirit of family pride in Ireland, which would be sufficient to make many poor, of both sexes, exert themselves to the uttermost rather than cast a stain upon their name, or bring a blush to the face of their relations. But now it is not so; the mendicant sets out to beg, and in every instance commences his new mode of life in some distant part of the country, where his name and family are not known.

Indeed, it is astonishing how any man can, for a moment, hesitate to form his opinion upon the subject of poor-laws. The English and Scotch gentry know something about the middle and lower classes of their respective countries, and of course they have a fixed system of provision for the poor in each. The ignorance of the Irish gentry upon almost every subject connected with the real good of the people is only in keeping with their ignorance of the people themselves. It is to be feared, however, that their disinclination to introduce poor laws arises less from actual ignorance than from an illiberal selfishness. The facts of the case are these:—In Ireland the whole support of the inconceivable multitude of paupers, who swarm like locusts over the surface of the country, rests upon the middle and lower classes, or rather upon the latter, for there is scarcely such a thing in this unhappy country as a middle class. In not one out of a thousand instances do the gentry contribute to the mendicant poor. In the first place, a vast proportion of our landlords are absentees, who squander upon their own pleasures or vices, in the theatres, saloons, or gaming-houses of France, or in the softer profligacies of Italy, that which ought to return in some shape to stand in the place of duties so shamefully neglected. These persons contribute nothing to the poor, except the various evils which their absence entails upon them.

On the other hand, the *resident* gentry never, in any case, assist a beggar, even in the remote parts of the country, where there are no Mendicity Institutions. Nor do the beggars ever think of applying to

them. They know that his honour's dogs would be slipped at them; or that the whip might be laid, perhaps, to the shoulders of a broken-hearted father, with his brood of helpless children wanting food; perhaps upon the emaciated person of a miserable widow, who begs for her orphans, only because the hands that supported, and would have defended, both her and them are mouldered into dust.

Upon the middle and lower classes, therefore, comes *directly* the heavy burden of supporting the great mass of pauperism that presses upon Ireland. It is certain that the Irish landlords know this, and that they are reluctant to see any law enacted which might make the performance of their duties to the poor compulsory. This, indeed, is natural in men who have so inhumanly neglected them.

But what must the state of a country be where those who are on the way to pauperism themselves are exclusively burdened with the support of the vagrant poor? It is like putting additional weight on a man already sinking under the burden he bears. The landlords suppose that because the maintenance of the idle who are able, and of the aged and infirm who are not able, to work comes upon the renters of land, they themselves are exempted from their support. This, if true, is as bitter a stigma upon their humanity as upon their sense of justice; but it is not true. Though the cost of supporting such an incredible number of the idle and helpless does, in the first place, fall upon the tenant, yet, by diminishing his means, and by often compelling him to purchase, towards the end of the season, a portion of food equal to that which he has given away in charity, it certainly becomes ultimately a clear deduction from the landlord's rent. In either case it is a deduction, but in the latter it is often doubly so; inasmuch as the poor tenants must frequently pay, at the close of a season, double, perhaps treble, the price which provision brought at the beginning of it.

Any person conversant with the Irish people must frequently have heard such dialogues as the following, during the application of a beggar for alms.

Mendicant. "We're axin your charity, for God's sake!"

Poor Tenant. "Whethen, for His sake you would get it, poor crathur, if we had it; but it's not for you widin the four corners of the house. It ud be well for us if we had *now* all we gave away in charity *durin' the whole year;* we wouldn't have to be buyin' for ourselves at three prices. Why don't you go up to the Big House? *They're* rich, and can afford it."

Mendicant, with a shrug, which sets all his coats and bags in motion. "Och! och! The Big House, inagh! Musha, do you want me, an' the childhre here, to be torn to pieces wid the dogs? or lashed wid a whip by one o' the sarwints? No, no, avourneen (with a hopeless shake of the head). That ud be a blue look-up, like a clear evenin'."

Poor Tenant. "Then, indeed, we haven't it to help you now, poor man. We're buyin' ourselves."

Mendicant. "Thin, throth, that's lucky, so it is! I've as purty a grain o' male here as you'd wish to thicken wather wid, that I struv to

get together, in hopes to be able to buy a quarther o' tobaccy, along wid a pair o' new bades an' a scapular for myself. I'm suspicious that there's about a stone ov it altogether. You can have it anundher the market price, for I'm frettin' at not havin' the scapular an me. Sure the Lord will sind me an' the childhre a bit an' sup some way else—glory to his name !—besides a lock o' praties in the corner o' the bag here, that'll do us for this day, anyway."

The bargain is immediately struck, and the poor tenant is glad to purchase, even from a beggar, his stone of meal, in consequence of getting it a few pence under market price. Such scenes as this, which are of frequent occurrence in the country parts of Ireland, need no comment.

This, certainly, is not a state of things which should be permitted to exist. Every man ought to be compelled to support the poor of his native parish according to his means. It is an indelible disgrace to the legislature so long to have neglected the paupers of Ireland. Is it to be thought of with common patience that a person rolling in wealth shall feed upon his turtle, his venison, and his costly luxuries of every description, for which he will not scruple to pay the highest price—that this heartless and selfish man, whether he reside at home or abroad, shall thus unconscionably pamper himself with viands purchased by the toil of the people, and yet not contribute to their miseries, when poverty, sickness, or age, throws them upon the scanty support of casual charity !

Shall this man be permitted to batten in luxury in a foreign land or at home, to whip our paupers from his carriage, or hunt them, like beasts of prey, from his grounds, whilst the lower classes—the gradually decaying poor—are compelled to groan under the burden of their support in addition to their other burdens ? Surely it is not a question which admits of argument. This subject has been darkened and made difficult by fine-spun and unintelligible theories, when the only knowledge necessary to understand it may be gained by spending a few weeks in some poor village in the interior of the country. As for Parliamentary Committees upon this or any other subject, they are, with reverence be it spoken, thoroughly contemptible. They will summon and examine witnesses who, for the most part, know little about the habits or distresses of the poor ; public money will be wasted in defraying their expenses and in printing reports ; resolutions will be passed ; something will be said about it in the House of Commons ; and, in a few weeks, after resolving and re-resolving, it is as little thought of as if it had never been the subject of investigation. In the meantime the evil proceeds—becomes more inveterate—eats into the already declining prosperity of the country—whilst those who suffer under it have the consolation of knowing that a Parliamentary Committee sat longer upon it than so many geese upon their eggs, but hatched nothing. Two circumstances connected with pauperism in Ireland are worthy of notice. The first is this—the Roman Catholics, who certainly constitute the bulk of the population, feel themselves called upon, from the peculiar tenets of their religion, to exercise

indiscriminate charity largely to the begging poor. They act under the impression that eleemosynary good works possess the power of cancelling sin to an extent almost incredible. Many of their religious legends are founded upon this view of the case; and the reader will find an appropriate one in the priest's sermon, as given in our tale of the "Poor Scholar." That legend is one which the author has many a time heard from the lips of the people, by whom it was implicitly believed. A man who may have committed a murder over night will the next day endeavour to wipe away his guilt by alms given for the purpose of getting the benefit of "the poor man's prayer." The principle of assisting our distressed fellow-creatures when rationally exercised, is one of the best in society; but here it becomes entangled with error, superstition, and even with crime—acts as a bounty upon imposture, and in some degree predisposes to guilt, from an erroneous belief that sin may be cancelled by alms and the prayers of mendicant impostors.

The second point in connection with pauperism is the immoral influence that proceeds from the relation in which the begging poor in Ireland stand towards the class by whom they are supported. These, as we have already said, are the poorest, least educated, and consequently the most ignorant description of the people. They are, also, the most numerous. There have been for centuries, probably since the Reformation itself, certain opinions floating among the lower classes in Ireland, all tending to prepare them for some great change in their favour, arising from the discomfiture of heresy, the overthrow of their enemies, and the exaltation of themselves and their religion.

Scarcely had the public mind subsided after the Rebellion of Ninety-eight, when the success of Bonaparte directed the eyes and the hopes of the Irish people towards *him*, as the person designed to be their deliverer. Many a fine fiction has the author of this work heard about that great man's escapes, concerning the bullets that conveniently turned aside from his person, and the sabres that civilly declined to cut him down. Many prophecies too were related, in which the glory of this country under his reign was touched off in the happiest colours. Pastorini also gave such notions an impulse. Eighteen twenty-five was to be the year of their deliverance: George the Fourth was never to fill the British throne; and the mill of Lowth was to be turned three times with human blood. The miller with the two thumbs was then living, said the mendicants, for they were the principal propagators of these opinions, and the great expounders of their own prophecies; so that of course there could be no further doubt upon the subject. Several of them had seen him, a red-haired man with broad shoulders, stout legs, exactly as a miller ought to have, and two thumbs on his right hand; all precisely as the prophecy had stated. Then there was *Beal-derg*, and several others of the fierce old Milesian chiefs, who along with their armies lay in an enchanted sleep, all ready to awake and take a part in the delivery of the country. "Sure such a man," and they would name him, in the time of the mendicant's

grandfather, "was once going to a fair to sell a horse—well and good the time was the dawn of morning, a little before daylight. He met a man who undertook to purchase his horse; they agreed upon the price, and the seller of him followed the buyer into a Rath, where he found a range of horses, each with an armed soldier asleep by his side, ready to spring upon him if awoke. The purchaser cautioned the owner of the horse, as they were about to enter the subterraneous dwelling, against touching either horse or man; but the countryman, happening to stumble, inadvertently laid his hand upon a sleeping soldier, who immediately leaped up, drew his sword, and asked, '*Wuil anam inh?*' (Is the time in it? Is the time arrived?) To which the horsedealer of the Rath replied, '*Ha niel. Gho dhee collhow areesht.*' (No; go to sleep again.) Upon this, the soldier immediately sank down in his former position, and unbroken sleep reigned throughout the cave." The influence on the warm imaginations of ignorant people of the fictions concocted by vagrant mendicants is very pernicious. They fill their minds with the most palpable absurdities, and, what is worse, with opinions which, along with being injurious to those who receive them, in every instance insure for those who propagate them a cordial and kind reception.

These mendicants consequently pander, for their own selfish ends, to the prejudices of the ignorant, which they nourish and draw out in a manner that has in no slight degree been subversive of the peace of the country. Scarcely any political circumstance occurs which they do not immediately seize upon and twist to their own purposes, or, in other words, to the opinions of those from whom they derive their support. When our present police first appeared in their uniforms and black belts, another prophecy, forsooth, was fulfilled. Immediately before the downfall of heresy a body of "Black Militia" was to appear. The police, then, are the black militia, and the people consider themselves another step nearer the consummation of their vague speculations.

In the year Ninety-eight, the Irish mendicants were active agents, clever spies, and expert messengers on the part of the people; and to this day they carry falsehood and the materials of outrage in its worst shape into the bosom of peaceable families, who would, otherwise, never become connected with a system which is calculated to bring nothing but ruin and destruction upon those who permit themselves to join it.

This evil, and it is no small one, would, by the introduction of poor-laws, be utterly abolished. The people would not only be more easily improved by purer knowledge; but education, when received, would not be corrupted by the infusion into it of such ingredients as the above. In many other points of view the confirmed and hackneyed mendicants of Ireland are a great evil to the morals of the people. We could easily detail them, but such not being our object at present, we will now dismiss the subject of poor-laws, and resume our narrative.

Far—far different from this description of impostors were Owen

M'Carthy and his family. Their misfortunes were not the consequences of negligence or misconduct on their own part. They struggled long but unavailingly against high rents and low markets; against neglect on the part of the landlord and his agent; against sickness, famine, and death. They had no alternative but to beg or starve. Owen was willing to work, but he could not procure employment, and provided he could, the miserable sum of sixpence a day, when food was scarce and dear, would not support him, his wife, and six little ones. He became a pauper, therefore, only to avoid starvation.

Heavy and black was his heart, to use the strong expression of the people, on the bitter morning when he set out to encounter the dismal task of seeking alms in order to keep life in himself and his family. The plan was devised on the preceding night; but to no mortal, except his wife, was it communicated. The honest pride of a man whose mind was above committing a mean action would not permit him to reveal what he considered the first stain that ever was known to rest upon the name of M'Carthy. He therefore sallied out under the beating of the storm, and proceeded, without caring much whither he went, until he got considerably beyond the bounds of his own parish.

In the meantime hunger pressed keenly upon him and them. The day had no appearance of clearing up; the heavy rain and sleet beat into their thin, worn garments, and the clamour of his children for food began to grow more and more importunate. They came to the shelter of a hedge which enclosed on one side a remote and broken road, along which, in order to avoid the risk of being recognised, they had preferred travelling. Owen stood here for a few minutes to consult with his wife as to where and when they should "make a beginning," but on looking round he found her in tears.

"Kathleen, asthore," said he, "I can't bid you not cry; bear up, acushla machree; bear up: sure, as I said when we came out this mornin', there's a good God above us, that can still turn over the good lafe for us, if we put our hopes in him."

"Owen," said his sinking wife, "it's not altogether bekase we're brought to this, that I'm cryin'. No, indeed."

"Thin what ails you, Kathleen, darlin?"

The wife hesitated, and evaded the question for some time; but at length, upon his pressing her for an answer, with a fresh gush of sorrow she replied:

"Owen, since you *must* know—och, may God pity us!—since you must know, it's wid hunger—*wid hunger!* I kept, unknownst, a little bit of bread to give the childhre this mornin', and that was part of it I gave you yesterday early—I'm near two days fastin'."

"Kathleen! Kathleen! Och! sure I know your worth, avillish. You were too good a wife, an' too good a mother, a'most! God forgive me, Kathleen! I fretted about beggin', dear; but as my heavenly Father's above me, I'm now happier to beg wid you by my side, nor if I war in the best house in the province widout you! Hould up, avourneen, for a while. Come on, childhre, darlins, an' the first house

we meet, we'll ax their char—— their assistance. Come on, darlins, all of yees. Why, my heart's asier, so it is. Sure we have your mother, childhre, safe wid us, an' what signifies anything, so long as *she's* left to us."

He then raised his wife tenderly, for she had been compelled to sit from weakness, and they bent their steps to a decent farm-house that stood a few perches off the road, about a quarter of a mile before them.

As they approached the door, the husband hesitated a moment; his face got paler than usual, and his lips quivered, as he said, "Kathleen ——"

"I know what you're goin' to say, Owen. No, acushla, *you* won't; *I'll* ax it myself."

"Do," said Owen, with difficultv; "I can't do it; but I'll overcome my pride afore long, I hope. It's thryin' to me, Kathleen, an' you know it is—for you know how little I ever expected to be brought to this."

"Husht, avillish! We'll thry, then, in the name o' God."

As she spoke, the children, herself, and her husband entered, to beg for the first time in their lives a morsel of food. Yes! timidly—with a blush of shame, red even to crimson, upon the pallid features of Kathleen—with grief acute and piercing—they entered the house together.

For some minutes they stood and spoke not. The unhappy woman, unaccustomed to the language of supplication, scarcely knew in what terms to crave assistance. Owen, himself, stood back, uncovered, his fine but much changed features overcast with an expression of deep affliction. Kathleen cast a single glance at him as if for encouragement. Their eyes met; she saw the upright man—the last remnant of the M'Carthy—himself once the friend of the poor, of the unhappy, of the afflicted—standing crushed and broken down by misfortunes which he had not deserved, waiting with patience for a morsel of charity. Owen, too, had *his* remembrances. He recollected the days when he sought and gained the pure and fond affections of his Kathleen; when beauty, and youth, and innocence encircled her with their light and their grace, as she spoke or moved; he saw her a happy wife and mother in her own home, kind and benevolent to all who required her good word or her good office, and remembered the sweetness of her light-hearted song; but now she was homeless. He remembered, too, how she used to plead with himself for the afflicted. It was but a moment; yet when their eyes met that moment was crowded by recollections that flashed across their minds with a keen sense of a lot so bitter and wretched as theirs. Kathleen could not speak, although she tried; her sobs denied her utterance; and Owen involuntarily sat upon a chair, and covered his face with his hand.

To an observing eye it is never difficult to detect the cant of imposture, or to perceive distress when it is real. The good woman of the house, as is usual in Ireland, was in the act of approaching them, unsolicited, with a double handful of meal—that is, what the Scotch

and northern Irish call a *gowpen*, or as much as both hands locked together can contain—when, noticing their distress, she paused a moment, eyed them more closely, and exclaimed :

"What's this? Why, there's something wrong wid you, good people! But first an' foremost take this, in the name an' honour of God."

"May the blessin' of the same Man[1] rest upon yees!" replied Kathleen. "This is a sorrowful thrial to us; for it's our first day to be upon the world; an' this is the first help of the kind we ever axed for, or ever got; an' indeed, now I find we haven't even a place to carry it in. I've no—b—b—cloth, or anything to hould it."

"Your first, is it?" said the good woman. "Your first! May the marciful queen o' heaven look down upon yees, but it's a bitther day yees war driven out on! Sit down there, you poor crathur. God pity you, I pray this day, for you *have* a heart-broken look! Sit down awhile, near the fire, you an' the childhre! Come over, darlins, an' warm yourselves! Och, oh! but it's the thousand pities to see sich fine childhre—handsome an' good-lookin' even as they are, brought to this! Come over, good man; get near the fire, for you're wet an' could all of yees. Brian, *ludher* them two lazy thieves o' dogs out o' that. *Eiree suas, a wadhee bradagh, agus go mah a shin!*—be off wid yees, ye lazy divils, that's not worth your feedin'! Come over, honest man."

Owen and his family were placed near the fire; the poor man's heart was full, and he sighed heavily.

"May he that it plased to thry us," he exclaimed, "reward you for this! We are," he continued, "a poor an' a sufferin' family; but it's the will of God that we should be so, an' sure we can't complain widout committin' sin. All we ax now is that it may be plasin' to him that brought us low to enable us to bear up undher our thrials. We would take it to our choice to beg an' be honest, sooner nor to be wealthy an' wicked! We have our failins an' our sins, God help us; but still there's nothin' dark or heavy on our consciences. Glory be to the name of God for it!"

"Throth, I believe you," replied the farmer's wife; "there's thruth an' honesty in your face; one may easily see the remains of dacency about yees all. Musha, throw your little things aside, an' stay where yees are to-day: you can't bring out the childhre undher the teem of rain an' sleet that's in it. Wurrah dheelish, but it's the bitther day all out! Faix, Paddy will get a dhrookin, so he will, at that weary fair wid the stirks, poor bouchal—a son of ours that's gone to Ballyboulteen to sell some cattle, an' he'll not be worth three hapuns afore he comes back. I hope he'll have sinse to go into some house, when he's done, an' dhry himself well, anyhow, besides takin' somethin' to keep out the could. Put by your things, an' don't think of goin' out sich a day."

"We thank you," replied Owen. "Indeed, we're glad to stay undher

[1] God is sometimes thus termed in Ireland. By "Man" here is meant person or being. He is also called the "Man above;" although this must have been intended for, and often is applied to Christ only.

your roof; for, poor things, they're badly able to thravel sich a day—these childhre."

"Musha, yees ate no breakfast, maybe?"

Owen and his family were silent. The children looked wistfully at their parents, anxious that they should confirm what the good woman surmised; the father looked again at his famished brood and his sinking wife, and nature overcame him.

"Food did not crass our lips this day," replied Owen; "an' I may say hardly anything yesterday."

"Oh, blessed mother! Here, Katty Murray, drop scrubbin' that dresser, an' put down the midlin' pot for stirabout. Be livin'! *manim an diouol*, woman alive, handle yourself; you might a had it boilin' by this. God presarve us!—to be two days widout atin! Be the crass, Katty, if you're not alive, I'll give you a douse o' the churnstaff that'll bring the fire to your eyes! Do you hear me?"

"I do hear you, an' did often feel you, too, for fraid hearin' wouldn't do. You think there's no places in the world but your own, I b'lieve. Faix, indeed! it's well come up wid us, to be randied about wid no less a switch than a churnstaff!"

"Is it givin' back talk you are? Bad end to me, if you look crucked but I'll lave you a mark to remember me by. What woman ud put up wid you but myself, you shkamin flipe? It wasn't to give me your bad tongue I hired you, but to do your business; an' be the crass above us, if you turn your tongue on me agin, I'll give you the weight o' the churnstaff. Is it bekase they're poor people, that it plased God to bring to this, that you turn up your nose at doin' anything to sarve them? There's not wather enough there, I say—put in more. What signifies all the stirabout that ud make? Put plinty in: it's betther always to have too much than too little. Faix, I tell you, you'll want a male's meat an' a night's lodgin' afore you die, if you don't mend your manners."

"Och, musha, the poor girl is doin' her best," observed Kathleen; "an' I'm sure she wouldn't be guilty of usin' pride to the likes of us, or to anyone that the Lord has laid his hand upon."

"She had betther not, while I'm to the fore," said her mistress. "What is she herself? Sure if it was a sin to be poor, God help the world! No; it's neither a sin nor a shame."

"Thanks be to God, no," said Owen; "it's neither the one nor the other. So long as we keep a fair name, an' a clear conscience, we can't ever say that our case is hard."

After some further conversation a comfortable breakfast was prepared for them, of which they partook with an appetite sharpened by their long abstinence from food. Their stay here was particularly fortunate, for as they were certain of a cordial welcome, and an abundance of that which they much wanted—wholesome food—the pressure of immediate distress was removed. They had time to think more accurately upon the little preparations for misery which were necessary, and, as the day's leisure was at their disposal, Kathleen's needle and scissors were industriously plied in mending the tattered

clothes of her husband and her children, in order to meet the inclemency of the weather.

On the following morning, after another abundant breakfast, and substantial marks of kindness from their entertainers, they prepared to resume their new and melancholy mode of life. As they were about to depart, the farmer's wife addressed them in the following terms—the farmer himself, by the way, being but the shadow of his worthy partner in life :

Wife. "Now, good people, you're takin' the world on your heads—"

Farmer. "Ay, good people, you're takin' the world on your heads ——"

Wife. "Hold your tongue, Brian, an' suck your dudeen. It's me that's spakin' to them, so none of your palaver, if you plase, till I'm done, an' then you may prache till Tib's Eve, an' that's neither before Christmas nor afther it."

Farmer. "Sure I'm sayin' nothin', Evleen, barrin' houldin' my tongue, *a shuchar.*"[1]

Wife. "You're takin' the world on yees, an' God knows 'tis a heavy load to carry, poor crathurs."

Farmer. "A heavy load, poor crathurs! God he knows it's that."

Wife. "Brian! *Gluntho ma?*—did you hear me? You'll be puttin' in your gab, an' me spakin'? How-an'-diver, as I was sayin', our house was the first yees came to, an' they say there's a great blessin' to thim that gives the *first* charity to a poor man or woman settin' out to look for their bit."

Farmer. "Throgs, ay! Whin they set out to look for their bit."

Wife. "By the crass, Bryan, you'd vex a saint. What have you to say in it, you *pittiogue?* Hould your whisht now, an' suck your dudeen, I say; sure I allow you a quarther o' tobaccy a week, an' what right have you to be puttin' in your gosther when other people's spakin'?"

Farmer. "Go an."

Wife. "So, you see, the long an' the short of it is, that whenever you happen to be in this side of the counthry, always come to *us.* You know the ould sayin'—when the poor man comes he brings a blessin', an' whin he goes he carries away a curse. You have as much meal as will last yees a day or two; an' God he sees you're heartily welcome to all yees got?"

Farmer. "God he sees you're heartily welcome ——"

Wife. "*Chorp an diouol,* Brian, hould your tongue, or I'll turn you out o' the kitchen. One can't hear their own ears for you, you poor squakin' dhrone. By the crass I'll—eh? Will you whisht, now?"

Farmer. "Go an. Amn't I dhrawin' my pipe?"

Wife. "Well, dhraw *it;* but don't dhraw me down upon you, barrin' ——Do you hear me? an' the sthrange people to the fore, too! Well,

[1] My sugar.

the Lord be wid yees, and bless yees! But afore yees go, jist lave your blessin' wid us; for it's a good thing to have the blessin' of the poor."

"The Lord bless you an' yours!" said Owen, fervently. "May you an' them never—oh, may you never—*never* suffer what we've suffered, nor know what it is to want a male's mate or a night's lodgin'!"

"Amin!" exclaimed Kathleen; "may the world flow upon you! for your good kind heart desarves it."

Farmer "An' whisper; I wish you'd offer up a prayer for the rulin' o' the tongue. The Lord might hear *you*, but there's no great hopes that ever he'll hear *me*; though I've prayed for it a'most ever since I was married, night an' day, winther an' summer; but no use, she's as bad as ever."

This was in a kind of friendly insinuating undertone to Owen, who, on hearing it, simply nodded his head, but made no other reply.

They then recommenced their journey, after having once more blessed, and been invited by, their charitable entertainers, who made them promise never to pass their house without stopping a night with them.

It is not our intention to trace Owen M'Carthy and his wife through all the variety which a wandering pauper's life affords. He never could reconcile himself to the habits of a mendicant. His honest pride and integrity of heart raised him above it; neither did he sink into the whine and cant of imposture, nor the slang of knavery. No; there was a touch of manly sorrow about him which neither time, nor familiarity with his degraded mode of life, could take away from him. His usual observation to his wife, and he never made it without a pang of intense bitterness, was, "Kathleen, darlin', it's thrue we have enough to ate an' to dhrink; but *we have no home!—no home!*" To a man like him it was a thought of surpassing bitterness, indeed.

"Ah! Kathleen," he would observe, "if we had but the poorest shed that could be built, provided it was *our own*, wouldn't we be happy? The bread we ate, avourneen, doesn't do us good. We don't work for it; it's the bread of shame and idleness: and yet it's Owen M'Carthy that ates it! But, avourneen, that's past; an' we'll never see our own home, or our own hearth, agin. That's what's cuttin' into my heart, Kathleen. Never!—never!"

Many a trial, too, of another kind was his patience called upon to sustain; particularly from the wealthy and the more elevated in life, when his inexperience as a mendicant led him to solicit their assistance.

"Begone, sirrah, off my grounds!" one would say. "Why don't you work, you sturdy impostor," another would exclaim, "rather than stroll about so lazily, training your brats to the gallows?" "You should be taken up, fellow, as a vagrant," a third would observe, "and if I ever catch you coming up my avenue again, depend upon it, I will slip my dogs at you and your idle spawn."

Owen, on these occasions, turned away in silence; he did not curse them; but the pangs of his honest heart went before him who

will, sooner or later, visit upon the heads of such men their cruel spurning and neglect of the poor.

"Kathleen," he observed to his wife one day, about a year or more after they had begun to beg—"Kathleen, I have been turnin' it in my mind that some of these childhre might sthrive to earn their bit an' sup, an' their little coverin' of clo'es, poor things. We might put them to herd cows in the summer, an' the *girshas* to somethin' else in the farmers' houses. What do you think, asthore?"

"For God's sake do, Owen; sure my heart's crushed to see them—my own childhre, that I could lay down my life for—beggin' from door to door. Och, do something for them that way, Owen, an' you'll relieve the heart that loves them. It's a sore sight to a mother's eye, Owen, to see her childhre beggin' their morsel."

"It is, darlin'—it is; we'll hire out the three eldest—Brian, an' Owen, an' Pether, to herd cows; an' we may get Peggy into some farmer's house to do loose jobs an' run of messages. Then we'd have only little Kathleen an' poor Ned along wid us. I'll thry, anyway, an' if I can get them places, who knows what may happen? I have a plan in my head that I'll tell you, thin."

"Arrah, what is it, Owen jewel? Sure if I know it, maybe when I'm sorrowful, that thinkin' of it, an' lookin' forrid to it will make me happier. An' I'm sure, acushla, you would like that."

"But maybe, Kathleen, if it wouldn't come to pass, that the disappointment ud be heavy on you?"

"How could it, Owen? Sure we can't be worse nor we are, whatever happens?"

"Thrue enough indeed, I forgot that; an' yet we might, Kathleen. Sure we'd be worse, if we or the childhre had bad health."

"God forgive me thin for what I said! We might be worse. Well, but what is the plan, Owen?"

"Why, when we get the childhre places, I'll sthrive to take a little house, an' work as a cottar. Then, Kathleen, '*we'd have a home of our own.*' I'd work from light to light; I'd work before hours an' afther hours; ay, nine days in the week, or we'd be comfortable in our own little home. We might be poor, Kathleen, I know that, an' hard pressed, too; but then, as I said, we'd have our own home, an' our own hearth; our morsel, if it ud be homely, would be sweet, for it would be the fruits of our own labour."

"Now, Owen, do you think you could manage to get that?"

"Wait, acushla, till we get the childhre settled. Then I'll thry the other plan, for it's good to thry anything that could take us out of this disgraceful life."

This humble speculation was a source of great comfort to them. Many a time have they forgotten their sorrows in contemplating the simple picture of their happy little cottage. Kathleen, in particular, drew with all the vivid colouring of a tender mother and an affectionate wife the various sources of comfort and contentment to be found even in a cabin, whose inmates are blessed with a love of independence, industry, and mutual affection.

Owen, in pursuance of his intention, did not neglect, when the proper season arrived, to place out his eldest children among the farmers. The reader need not be told that there was that about him which gained respect. He had, therefore, little trouble in obtaining his wishes on this point, and, to his great satisfaction, he saw three of them hired out to earn their own support.

It was now a matter of some difficulty for him to take a cabin and get employment. They had not a single artic e of furniture, and neither bed nor bedding, with the exception of blankets almost worn past use. He was resolved, however, to give up, at all risks, the life of a mendicant. For this purpose he and his wife agreed to adopt a plan quite usual in Ireland under circumstances somewhat different from his: this was that Kathleen should continue to beg for their support until the first half-year of their children's service should expire; and in the meantime that he, if possible, should secure employment for himself. By this means his earnings and those of his children might remain untouched, so that in half a year he calculated upon being able to furnish a cabin, and proceed, as a cottier, to work for and support his young children and his wife, who determined, on her part, not to be idle any more than her husband. As the plan was a likely one, and as Owen was bent on earning his bread rather than be a burthen to others, it is unnecessary to say that it succeeded. In less than a year he found himself once more in a home, and the force of what he felt on sitting for the first time since his pauperism at his own hearth may easily be conceived by the reader. For some years after this, Owen got on slowly enough: his wages as a daily labourer being so miserable that it required him to exert every nerve to keep the house over their head. What, however, will not carefulness and a virtuous determination, joined to indefatigable industry, do?

After some time, backed as he was by his wife, and even by his youngest children, he found himself beginning to improve. In the mornings and the evenings he cultivated his garden and his rood of potato ground. He also collected with a wheelbarrow, which he borrowed from an acquaintance, compost from the neighbouring road; scoured an old drain before his door; dug rich earth, and tossed it into the pool of rotten water beside the house, and, in fact, adopted several other modes of collecting manure. By this means he had, each spring, a large portion of rich stuff on which to plant his potatoes. His landlord permitted him to spread this for planting upon his land; and Owen, ere long, instead of a rood, was able to plant half an acre, and ultimately an acre of potatoes. The produce of this being more than sufficient for the consumption of his family, he sold the surplus, and with the money gained by the sale was enabled to sow half an acre of oats, of which, when made into meal, he disposed of the greater share.

Industry is capital; for even when unaided by capital it creates it; whereas idleness with capital produces only poverty and ruin. Owen, after selling his meal and as much potatoes as he could spare, found himself able to purchase a cow. Here was means of making more manure; he had also straw enough for her provender during the

winter. The cow, by affording milk to his family, enabled them to live more cheaply; her butter they sold, and this, in addition to his surplus meal and potatoes every year, soon made him feel that he had a few guineas to spare. He now bethought him of another mode of helping himself forward in the world: after buying the best "slip" of a pig he could find, a sty was built for her, and ere long he saw a fine litter of young pigs within a snug shed. These he reared until they were about two months old, when he sold them, and found that he had considerably gained by the transaction. This department, however, was under the management of Kathleen, whose life was one of incessant activity and employment. Owen's children, during the period of his struggles and improvements, were, by his advice, multiplying *their* little capital as fast as himself. The two boys, who had now shot up into the stature of young men, were at work as labouring servants in the neighbourhood. The daughters were also engaged as servants with the adjoining farmers. The boys bought each a pair of two year old heifers, and the daughters one. These they sent to graze up in the mountains at a trifling charge for the first year or two: when they became springers, they put them to rich infield grass for a few months, until they got a marketable appearance, after which their father brought them to the neighbouring fairs, where they usually sold to great advantage, in consequence of the small outlay required in rearing them.

In fact, the principle of industry ran through the family. There was none of them idle, none of them a burthen or a check upon the profits made by the labourer. On the contrary, "they laid their shoulders together," as the phrase is, and proved to the world that when the proper disposition is followed up by suitable energy and perseverance, it must generally reward him who possesses it.

It is certainly true that Owen's situation in life *now* was essentially different from that which it had been during the latter years of his struggles *as a farmer*. It was much more favourable, and far better calculated to develop successful exertion. If there be a class of men deserving public sympathy, it is that of the small farmers of Ireland. Their circumstances are fraught with all that is calculated to depress and ruin them: rents far above their ability, increasing poverty, and bad markets. The land, which during the last war might have enabled the renter to pay three pounds per acre, and yet still maintain himself with tolerable comfort, could not now pay more than one pound, or, at the most, one pound ten; and yet such is the infatuation of landlords, that, in most instances, the terms of leases taken out then are rigorously exacted. Neither can the remission of yearly arrears be said to strike at the root of the evils under which they suffer. The fact of the disproportionate rent hanging over them is a disheartening circumstance that paralyses their exertion and sinks their spirits. If a landlord remit the rent for one term, he deals more harshly with the tenant at the next: whatever surplus, if any, his former indulgence leaves in the tenant's hands, instead of being expended upon his property as capital, and being permitted to lay the

foundation of hope and prosperity, is drawn from him, at next term, and the poor struggling tenant is thrown back into as much distress, embarrassment, and despondency as ever. There are, I believe, few tenants in Ireland of the class I allude to, who are not one gale to three in arrear. Now, how can it be expected that such men will labour with spirit and earnestness to raise crops which they may never reap? crops which the landlord may seize upon to secure as much of his rent as he can.

We have known a case in which the arrears were not only remitted, but the rent lowered to a reasonable standard, such as, considering the markets, could be paid. And what was the consequence? The tenant, who was looked upon as a negligent man, from whom scarcely any rent could be got, took courage, worked his farm with a spirit and success which he had not evinced before, and ere long was in a capacity to pay his gales to the very day; so that the judicious and humane landlord was finally a gainer by his own excellent economy. This was an experiment, and it succeeded beyond expectation.

Owen M'Carthy did not work with more zeal and ability as a humble cottier than he did when a farmer; but the tide was against him as a landholder, and instead of having advanced, he actually lost ground until he became a pauper. No doubt the peculiarly unfavourable run of two hard seasons, darkened by sickness and famine, were formidable obstacles to him; but he must eventually have failed, even had they not occurred. They accelerated his downfall, but did not cause it.

The Irish people, though poor, are exceedingly anxious to be independent. Their highest ambition is to hold a farm. So strong is this principle in them, that they will, without a single penny of capital, or any visible means to rely on, without consideration or forethought, come forward and offer a rent which, if they reflected only for a moment, they must feel to be unreasonably high. This, indeed, is a great evil in Ireland. But what, in the meantime, must we think of those imprudent landlords, and their more imprudent agents, who let their land to such persons, without proper inquiry into their means, knowledge of agriculture, and general character as moral and industrious men. A farm of land is to be let; it is advertised through the parish; application is to be made, before such a day, to so and so. The day arrives, the agent or the land-steward looks over the proposals, and after singling out the highest bidder, declares him tenant, as a matter of course. Now perhaps this said tenant does not possess a shilling in the world, nor a shilling's worth. Most likely he is a new-married man, with nothing but his wife's bed and bedding, his wedding suit, and his blackthorn cudgel, which we may suppose him to keep in reserve for the bailiff. However, he commences his farm; and then follow the shiftings, the scramblings, and the fruitless struggles to succeed where success is impossible. His farm is not half tilled; his crops are miserable; the gale day has already passed, yet he can pay nothing until he takes it out of the land. Perhaps he runs away—makes a moonlight flitting—and, by

the aid of his friends, succeeds in bringing the crop with him. The landlord or agent declares he is a knave, forgetting that the man had no other alternative, and that they were the greater knaves, and fools too, for encouraging him to undertake a task that was beyond his strength.

In calamity we are anxious to derive support from the sympathy of our friends; in our success we are eager to communicate to them the power of participating in our happiness. When Owen once more found himself independent and safe, he longed to realise two plans on which he had some time before been seriously thinking. The first was to visit his former neighbours, that they might at length know that Owen M'Carthy's station in the world was such as became his character. The second was, if possible, to take a farm in his native parish, that he might close his days among the companions of his youth and the friends of his maturer years. He had also another motive: there lay the burying-place of the M,Carthys, in which slept the mouldering dust of his own "golden-haired" Alley. With them—in his daughter's grave—he intended to sleep his long sleep. Affection for the dead is the memory of the heart. In no other graveyard could he reconcile it to himself to be buried; to it had all his forefathers been gathered; and though calamity had separated him from the scenes where they had passed through existence, yet he was resolved that death should not deprive him of its last melancholy consolation—that of reposing with all that remained of the "departed," who had loved him, and whom he had loved. He believed that to neglect this would be to abandon a sacred duty, and felt sorrow at the thought of being like an absent guest from the assembly of *his own* dead; for there is a principle of undying hope in the heart that carries, with bold and beautiful imagery, the realities of life into the silent recesses of death itself.

Having formed the resolution of visiting his old friends at Tubber Derg, he communicated it to Kathleen and his family; his wife received the intelligence with undisguised delight.

"Owen," she replied, "indeed, I'm glad you mintioned it. Many a time the thoughts of our place, an' the people about it, comes over me. I know, Owen, it'll go to your heart to see it; but still, avourneen, you'd like, too, to see the ould faces an' the warm hearts of them that pitied us an' helped us, as well as they could, when we war broken down."

"I would, Kathleen; but I'm not goin' merely to see thim an' the place. I intind, if I can, to take a bit of land somewhere near Tubber Derg. I'm unasy in my mind, for fraid I'd not sleep in the grave-yard where all belongin' to me lie."

A chord of the mother's heart was touched, and in a moment the memory of their beloved child brought the tears to her eyes.

"Owen, avourneen, I have one requist to ax of you, and I'm sure you won't refuse it to me: if I die afore you, let me buried wid Alley. Who has a right to sleep so near her as her own mother?"

"The child's in my heart still," said Owen, suppressing his emotion;

"thinkin' of the unfortunate mornin' I wint to Dublin brings her back to me. I see her standin', wid her fair, pale face—pale—oh, my God! —wid hunger an' sickness—her little thin clo'es an' her golden hair tossed about by the dark blast—the tears in her eyes, an' the smile that she once had on her face—houldin' up her mouth, an' sayin', 'Kiss *me* agin, father,' as if she knew, somehow, that I'd never see her, nor her me, any more. An' whin I looked back, as I was turnin' the corner, there she stood, strainin' her eyes afther her father, that she was then takin' the last sight of until the judgment day!"

His voice here became broken, and he sat in silence for a few minutes.

"It's sthrange," he added, with more firmness, "how she's so often in my mind!"

"But, Owen dear," replied Kathleen, "sure it was the will of God that she should lave us. She's now a bright angel in heaven, an' I dunna if it's right—indeed, I doubt it's sinful for us to think so much about her. Who knows but her innocent spirit is makin' inthercession for us all, before the blessed Mother o' God! Who knows but it was her that got us the good fortune that flowed in upon us, an' that made our strugglin' an' our labourin' turn out so *lucky*."

The idea of being *lucky* or *unlucky* is, in Ireland, an enemy to industry. It is certainly better that the people should believe success in life to be, as it is, the result of virtuous exertion, than of contingent circumstances over which they themselves have no control. Still, there was something beautiful in the superstition of Kathleen's affections; something that touched the heart and its dearest associations.

"It's very true, Kathleen," replied her husband; "but God is ever ready to help them that keeps an honest heart, an' do everything in their power to live creditably. They may fail for a time, or he may thry them for a while, but sooner or later good intintions and honest labour will be rewarded. Look at ourselves—blessed be his name!"

"But whin do you mane to go to Tubber Derg, Owen?"

"In the beginnin' of the next week. An' Kathleen, ahagur, if you remimber the bitther mornin' we came upon the world—but we'll not be spakin' of that now. I don't like to think of it. Some other time, maybe, when we're settled among our ould friends, I'll mintion it."

"Well, the Lord bliss your endayvours, anyhow! Och, Owen, do thry an' get us a snug farm somewhere near them. But you didn't answer me about Alley, Owen?"

"Why, you must have your wish, Kathleen, although I intended to keep that place for myself. Still, we can sleep one on aich side of her; an' that may be asily done, for our buryin' ground is large: so set your mind at rest on that head. I hope God won't call us till we see our childhre settled dacently in the world. But sure, at all evints, let his blessed will be done!"

"Amin! amin! It's not right of anyone to keep their hearts fixed

too much upon the world; nor even, they say, upon one's own childhre."

"People may love their childhre as much as they plase, Kathleen, if they don't let their *grah* for them spoil the crathurs, by givin' them their own will, till they become headstrong an' overbearin'. Now let my linen be as white as a bone before Monday, plase goodness, I hope, by that time, that Jack Dogherty will have my new clo'es made; for I intind to go as dacent as ever they seen me in my best days."

"An' so you will, too, avillish. Throth, Owen, it's you that'll be the proud man, steppin' in to them in all your grandeur! Ha, ha, ha! The spirit o' the M'Carthys is in you still, Owen."

"Ha, ha, ha! It is, darlin'; it is, indeed; an' I'd be sarry it wasn't. I long to see poor Widow Murray. I dunna is her son, Jemmy, married. Who knows, afther all we suffered, but I might be able to help her yet?—that is, if she stands in need of it. But I suppose her childhre's grown up now, an' able to assist her. Now, Kathleen, mind Monday next; an' have everything ready. I'll stay away a week or so, at the most, an' afther that I'll have news for you about all o' them."

When Monday morning arrived, Owen found himself ready to set out for Tubber Derg. The tailor had not disappointed him; and Kathleen, to do her justice, took care that the proofs of her good housewifery should be apparent in the whiteness of his linen. After breakfast, he dressed himself in all his finery; and it would be difficult to say whether the harmless vanity that peeped out occasionally from his simplicity of character, or the open and undisguised triumph of his faithful wife, whose eye rested on him with pride and affection, was most calculated to produce a smile.

"Now, Kathleen," said he, when preparing for his immediate departure, "I'm thinkin' of what they'll say, when they see me so smooth an' warm lookin'. I'll engage they'll be axin one another, 'Musha, how did Owen M'Carthy get an at all, to be so well to do in the world as he appears to be, afther failin' on his ould farm?'"

"Well, but Owen, you know how to manage them."

"Throth, I do that. But there's *one* thing they'll never get out o' me, anyway."

"You won't tell *that* to any o' them, Owen?"

"Kathleen, if I thought they only suspected it, I'd never show my face in Tubber Derg agin. I think I could bear to be—an' yet it ud be a hard struggle wid me too—but I *think* I could bear to be buried among black strangers, rather than it should be said, over my grave, among my own, 'There's where Owen M'Carthy lies—who was the only man of his name that ever begged his morsel on the king's highway. There he lies, the descendant of the great M'Carthy Mores, an' yet he was a beggar.' I know, Kathleen achora, it's neither a sin nor a shame to ax one's bit from our fellow-creatures, whin fairly brought to it, widout any fault of our own; but still I feel something in me that can't bear to think of it widout shame an' heaviness of heart."

"Well, it's one comfort that nobody knows it but ourselves. The

poor childhre, for their own sakes, won't ever breathe it; so that it's likely the sacret 'ill be berrid wid us."

"I hope so, acushla. Does this coat sit asy atween the shouldhers? I feel it catch me a little."

"The sorra nicer. There; it was only your waistcoat that was turned down in the collar. Here—hould your arm. There now—it wanted to be pulled down a little at the cuffs. Owen, it's a beauty; an' I think I have good right to be proud out of it, for it's every thread my own spinnin'."

"How do I look in it, Kathleen? Tell me thruth, now."

"Throth, you're twenty years younger; the never a day less."

"I think I needn't be ashamed to go afore my ould friends in it, anyway. Now bring me my staff from undher the bed above, an', in the name o' God, I'll set out."

"Which o' them, Owen? Is it the oak or the blackthorn?

"The oak, acushla. Oh, no; not the blackthorn. It's it that I brought to Dublin wid me, the unlucky thief, an' that I had while we wor *a shaughran*. Divil a one o' me but ud blush in the face, if I brought it even in my hand afore them. The oak, ahagur; the oak. You'll get it atween the foot o' the bed an' the wall."

When Kathleen placed the staff in his hand, he took off his hat and blessed himself, then put it on, looked at his wife, and said: "Now, darlin', in the name o' God, I'll go. Husht, avillish machree, don't be cryin'; sure I'll be back to you in a week."

"Och! I can't help it, Owen. Sure this is the second time you war ever away from me more nor a day; an' I'm thinkin' of what happened, both to you an' me, the *first* time you wint. Owen, acushla, I feel that if anything happened you, I'd break my heart."

"Arrah, what ud happen me, darlin', wid God to protect me? Now, God be wid you, Kathleen dheelish, till I come back to you wid good news, I hope. I'm not goin' in sickness an' misery, as I wint afore, to see a man that wouldn't hear my appale to him; an' I'm lavin' you comfortable, agrah, an' wantin' for nothin'. Sure it's only about five-an'-twenty miles from this—a mere step. The good God bless an' take care of you, my darlin' wife, till I come home to you!"

He kissed the tears that streamed from her eyes; and, hemming several times, pressed her hand, his face rather averted, then grasped his staff, and commenced his journey.

Scenes like this were important events to our humble couple. Life, when untainted by the crimes and artificial manners which destroy its purity, is a beautiful thing to contemplate among the virtuous poor; and where the current of affection runs deep and smooth, the slightest incident will agitate it. So was it with Owen M'Carthy and his wife. Simplicity, truth, and affection constituted their character. In them there was no complication of incongruous elements. The order of their virtues was not broken, nor the purity of their affections violated, by the anomalous blending together of opposing principles, such as are to be found in those who are involuntarily contaminated by the corruption of human society.

Owen had not gone far, when Kathleen called to him: "Owen, ahagur—stand, darlin'; but don't come back a step, for fraid o' bad luck."[1]

"Did I forget anything, Kathleen?" he inquired. "Let me see; no; sure I have my beads an' my tobaccy box, an' my two clane shirts an' hankerchers in the bundle. What is it, acushla?"

"I needn't be axin' you, for I know you wouldn't forget it; but for fraid you might—Owen, whin you're at Tubber Derg, go to little Alley's grave, an' look at it; an' bring me back word how it appears. You might get it cleaned up, if there's weeds or anything growin' upon it; and, Owen, would you bring me a bit o' the clay, tied up in your pocket. Whin you're there, spake to her; tell her it was the lovin' mother that bid you, an' say anything that you'd think might keep her asy, an' give her pleasure. Tell her we're not now as we wor whin she was wid us; that we don't feel hunger, nor cowld, nor want; an' that nothin' is a throuble to us, barrin' that we miss *her*—ay, even yet —a *suillish machree*[2] that she was—that we miss her fair face an' goolden head from among us. Tell her this; an' tell her it was the lovin' mother that said it, an' that sint the message to her."

"I'll do it all, Kathleen; I'll do it all—all. An' now go in, darlin', an' don't be frettin'. Maybe we'll soon be near her, plase God, where we can see the place she sleeps in often."

They then separated again; and Owen, considerably affected by the maternal tenderness of his wife, proceeded on his journey. He had not, actually, even at the period of his leaving home, been able to determine on what particular friend he should first call. That his welcome would be hospitable, nay, enthusiastically so, he was certain. In the meantime, he vigorously pursued his journey; and partook neither of refreshment nor rest until he arrived, a little after dusk, at a turn of the well-known road, which, had it been daylight, would have opened to him a view of Tubber Derg. He looked towards the beeches, however, under which it stood; but to gain a sight of it was impossible. His road now lying a little to the right, he turned to the house of his sterling friend, Frank Farrell, who had given him and his family shelter and support, when he was driven, without remorse, from his own holding. In a short time he reached Frank's residence, and felt a glow of sincere satisfaction at finding the same air of comfort and warmth about it as formerly. Through the kitchen window he saw the strong light of the blazing fire, and heard, ere he presented himself, the loud hearty laugh of his friend's wife, precisely as light and animated as it had been fifteen years before.

Owen lifted the latch and entered, with that fluttering of the pulse which every man feels on meeting with a friend after an interval of many years.

"Musha, good people, can yees tell me is Frank Farrell at home?"

[1] When an Irish peasant sets out on a journey, or to transact business in a fair or market, he will not, if possible, turn back. It is considered unlucky; as it is also to be crossed by a hare, or met by a red-haired woman.

[2] Light of my heart.

"Why, thin, he's not jist widin now, but he'll be here in no time entirely," replied one of his daughters. "Won't you sit down, honest man, an' we'll sind for him?"

"I'm thankful to you," said Owen. "I'll sit, sure enough, till he comes in."

"Why, thin!—eh! it must—it *can* be no other!" exclaimed Farrell's wife, bringing over a candle and looking Owen earnestly in the face; "sure, I'd know that voice all the world over! Why, thin, marciful Father—Owen M'Carthy,—Owen M'Carthy, is it your four quarthers that's livin' an' well? Queen o' Heaven, Owen M'Carthy, darlin', you're welcome!" the word was here interrupted by a hearty kiss from the kind housewife—"welcome a thousand an' a thousand times! *Vick na hoiah!* Owen, dear, an' are you livin' at all? An' Kathleen, Owen, an' the childhre, an' all of yees—an' how are they?"

"Throth we're livin' an' well, Bridget; never was betther, thanks be to God an' you, in our lives."

Owen was now surrounded by such of Farrell's children as were old enough to remember him, every one of whom he shook hands with, and kissed.

"Why, thin, the Lord save my sowl, Bridget," said he, "are these the little bouchaleens an' colleens that were runnin' about my feet whin I was here afore? Well to be sure! how they do shoot up! An' is this Atty?"

"No; but *this* is Atty, Owen; faix, Brian outgrew him; an' here's Mary, an' this is Bridget Oge."

"Well!—well! But where did these two young shoots come from, this boy an' the colleen here? They worn't to the fore, in *my* time Bridget."

"This is Owen, called afther yourself,—an' this is Kathleen. I needn't tell you who she was called afther."

"*Gutsho, alanna? thurm pogue?*—come here, child, and kiss me," said Owen, to his little namesake; "an' sure I can't forget the little woman here; *gutsho*, a colleen, and kiss me too."

Owen took her on his knee, and kissed her twice.

"Och, but poor Kathleen," said he, "will be the proud woman of this, when she hears it; in throth she will be that."

"Arrah! what's comin' over me!" said Mrs. Farrell. "Brian, run up to Micky Lowrie's for your father. An' see, Brian, don't say who's wantin' him, till we give him a start. Mary, come here, acushla," she added to her eldest daughter in a whisper—"take these two bottles, an' fly up to Peggy Finigan's for the full o' them o' whisky. Now be back before you're there, or if you don't, that I mightn't, but you'll see what you'll get. Fly, aroon, an' don't let the grass grow undher your feet. An' Owen, darlin'—but first sit over to the fire—here, get over to this side, it's the snuggest; arrah, Owen—an' sure I dunna what to ax you first. You're all well? all to the fore?"

"All well, Bridget, an' thanks be to heaven, all to the fore."

"Glory be to God! Throth, it warms my heart to hear it. An' the childhre's all up finely, boys an' girls?"

"Throth, they are, Bridget, as good-lookin' a family o' childhre as you'd wish to see. An' what is betther, they're as good as they're good-lookin'."

"Throth, they couldn't but be that, if they tuck at all afther their father an' mother. Bridget, arown, rub the pan betther—an' lay the knife down, I'll cut the bacon myself, but go an' get a dozen o' the freshest eggs; an' Kathleen, Owen, how does poor Kathleen look? Does she stand it as well as yourself?"

"As young as ever you seen her. God help her! a thousand degrees betther now nor whin you seen her last."

"An' well to do, Owen?—now tell the truth? Och, musha, I forget who I'm spakin' to, or I wouldn't disremimber the ould sayin' that's abroad this many a year:—who ever knew a M'Carthy of Tubber Derg to tell a lie, break his word, or refuse to help a friend in distress. But, Owen, you're well to do in the world?"

"We're as well, Bridget, or may be betther, nor you ever knew us, except, indeed, afore the ould lase was run out wid us."

"God be praised agin! Musha, turn round a little, Owen, for 'fraid Frank ud get too clear a sight of your face at first. Arrah, do you think he'll know you? Och, to be sure he will; I needn't ax. Your voice would tell upon you, any day."

"Know me! Indeed, Frank ud know my shadow. He'll know me wid half a look."

And Owen was right, for quickly did the eye of his old friend recognise him, despite of the little plot that was laid to try his penetration. To describe their interview would be to repeat the scene we have already attempted to depict between Owen and Mrs. Farrell. No sooner were the rites of hospitality performed than the tide of conversation began to flow with greater freedom. Owen ascertained one important fact, which we will here mention, because it produces in a great degree the want of anything like an independent class of yeomanry in the country. On inquiring after his old acquaintances, he discovered that a great number of them, owing to high rents, had emigrated to America. They belonged to that class of independent farmers who, after the expiration of their old leases, finding the little capital which they had saved beginning to diminish in consequence of rents which they could not pay, deemed it more prudent, while anything remained in their hands, to seek a country where capital and industry might be made available. Thus did the landlords, by their mismanagement and neglect, absolutely drive off their estates the only men who, if properly encouraged, were capable of becoming the strength and pride of the country. It is this system, joined to the curse of middlemen and sub-letting, which has left the country without any third grade of decent, substantial yeomen, who might stand as a bond of peace between the highest and the lowest classes. It is this which has split the kingdom into two divisions, constituting the extreme ends of society—the wealthy and the wretched. If this third class existed, Ireland would neither be so political nor discontented as she is; but, on the contrary, more remarkable for peace

and industry. At present, the lower classes, being too poor, are easily excited by those who promise them a better order of things than that which exists These theorists step into the exercise of that legitimate influence which the landed proprietors have lost by their neglect There is no middle class in the country, who can turn round to them and say, "Our circumstances are easy, we want nothing; carry your promises to the poor, for that which you hold forth to *their* hopes, *we* enjoy in reality." The poor soldier, who, because he was wretched, volunteered to go on the forlorn hope, made a fortune; but when asked if he would go on a second enterprise of a similar kind, shrewdly replied: "General, I am *now* an independent man; send some *poor* devil on your forlorn hope who wants to make a fortune."

Owen now heard anecdotes and narratives of all occurrences, whether interesting or strange, that had taken place during his absence. Among others, was the death of his former landlord, and the removal of the agent who had driven him to beggary. Tubber Derg, he found, was then the property of a humane and considerate man, who employed a judicious and benevolent gentleman to manage it.

"One thing I can tell you," said Frank; "it was but a short time in the new agent's hands when the dacent farmers stopped goin' to America."

"But, Frank," said Owen, and he sighed on putting the question, "who is in Tubber Derg now?"

"Why, thin, a son of ould Rousin' Red-head's, of Tullyvernon—young Con Roe, or the Ace o' Hearts—for he was called both by the youngsters—if you remimber him. His head's as red, an' double as big, even, as his father's was, an' you know that no hat would fit ould Con, until he sent his measure to Jemmy Lamb, the hatter. Dick Nugent put it out on him that Jemmy always made Rousin' Red-head's hat either upon the half-bushel pot or a five gallon keg of whisky. 'Talkin' of the keg,' says Dick, 'for the matther o' that,' says he, 'divil a much differ the hat will persave; for the one'—meaning ould Con's head, who was a hard drinker—'the one,' says Dick, 'is as much a keg as the other—ha! ha! ha!' Dick met Rousin' Red-head another day. 'Arrah, Con,' says he, 'why do you get your hats made upon a *pot*, man alive? Sure that's the rason that you're so fond o' *pot*een.' A quare mad crathur was Dick, an' would go forty miles for a fight. Poor fellow, he got his skull broke in a skrimmage betwixt the Redmonds and the O'Hanlons; an' his last words were, 'Bad luck to you, Redmond—O'Hanlon, I never thought *you*, above all men, dead an' gone, would be the death o' me.' Poor fellow! he was for pacifyin' them, for a wondher; but instead o' that, he got pacified himself."

"An' how is young Con doin', Frank?"

"Hut, divil a much time he has to do aither well or ill, yit. There was four tenants on Tubber Derg since you left it, an' he's the fifth. It's hard to say how he'll do; but I believe he's the best o' thim, for so far. That may be owin' to the landlord. The rent's let down to

him ; an' I think he'll be able to take bread, an' good bread too, out of it."

"God send, poor man!"

"Now, Owen, would you like to go back to it?"

"I can't say that. I love the place, *but I suffered too much in it.* No ; but I'll tell you, Frank, if there was e'er a snug farm near it that I could get rasonable, I'd take it."

Frank slapped his knee exultingly. "*Ma chuirp?*—do you say so, Owen?"

"Indeed I do."

"Thin, upon my song, that's the luckiest thing I ever knew. There's this blessed minute a farm o' sixteen acres that the Lacys is lavin'—goin' to America—an' it's to be set. They'll go the week afther next, an' the house needn't be cowld, for you can come to it the very day afther they lave it."

"Well," said Owen, "I'm glad of that. Will you come wid me to-morrow, an' we'll see about it?"

"To be sure I will ; an' what's betther, too, the agint is a son of ould Misther Rogerson's, a man that knows you an' the history o' them you came from well. An' another thing, Owen! I tell you, whin it's abroad that *you* want to take the farm, there's not a man in the parish would bid agin you. You may know that yourself."

"I think, indeed, they would rather serve me than otherwise," replied Owen ; "an' in the name o' God, we'll see what can be done. Misther Rogerson himself ud spake to his son for me, so that I'll be sure of his intherest. Arrah, Frank, how is an ould friend o' mine, that I have a great regard for—poor Widow Murray?"

"Widow Murray! Poor woman, *she's* happy."

"You don't mane she's dead?"

"She's dead, Owen, and happy, I trust, in the Saviour. She died last spring was a two years."

"God be good to her sowl! An' are the childhre in her place still? It's she that was the dacent woman."

"Throth, they are ; an' sorrow a betther doin' family in the parish than they are. It's they that'll be glad to see you, Owen. Many a time I seen their poor mother, heavens be her bed, lettin' down the tears whin she used to be spakin' of you, or mintionin' how often you sarved her; espishially about some day or other that you previnted her cows from bein' canted for the rint. She's dead now, an' God he knows an honest, hard-workin' woman she ever was."

"Dear me, Frank, isn't it a wondher to think how the people dhrop off! There's Widow Murray, one o' my ouldest frinds, an' Pether M'Mahon, an' Barny Lorinan—not to forget pleasant Rousin' Red-head—all taken away! Well!—well! Sure it's the will o' God! We can't be here always."

After much conversation, enlivened by the bottle, though but sparingly used on the part of Owen, the hour of rest arrived, when the family separated for the night.

The grey dawn of a calm, beautiful summer's morning found Owen

up and abroad long before the family of honest Frank had risen. When dressing himself, with an intention of taking an early walk, he was asked by his friend why he stirred so soon, or if he—his host—should accompany him.

"No," replied Owen; "lie still; jist let me look over the country while it's asleep. Whin I'm musin' this a-way I don't like anybody to be along wid me. I have a place to go an' see, too—an' a message—a tendher message, from poor Kathleen, to deliver, that I wouldn't wish a second person to hear. Sleep Frank. I'll jist crush the head o' my pipe agin one o' the half-burned turf that the fire was raked wid, an' walk out for an hour or two. Afther our breakfast we'll go an' look about this new farm."

He sallied out as he spoke, and closed the door after him in that quiet, thoughtful way for which he was ever remarkable. The season was midsummer, and the morning wanted at least an hour of sunrise. Owen ascended a little knoll above Frank's house, on which he stood and surveyed the surrounding country with a pleasing but melancholy interest. As his eye rested on Tubber Derg, he felt the difference strongly between the imperishable glories of nature's works and those which are executed by man. His house he would not have known, except by its site. It was not, in fact, the same house, but another which had been built in its stead. This disappointed and vexed him. An object on which his affections had been placed was removed. A rude stone house stood before him, rough and unplastered, against each end of which was built a stable and cow-house, sloping down from the gables to low doors at both sides; adjoining these rose two mounds of filth, large enough to be easily distinguished from the knoll on which he stood. He sighed as he contrasted it with the neat and beautiful farm-house which shone there in his happy days, white as a lily, beneath the covering of the lofty beeches. There was no air of comfort, neatness, or independence about it; on the contrary, everything betrayed the evidence of struggle and difficulty, joined, probably, to want both of skill and of capital. He was disappointed, and turned his gaze upon the general aspect of the country, and the houses in which either his old acquaintances or their children lived. The features of the landscape were certainly the same; but even here was a change for the worse. The warmth of colouring which wealth and independence give to the appearance of a cultivated country was gone. Decay and coldness seemed to brood upon everything he saw. The houses, the farmyards, the ditches, and enclosures were all marked by the blasting proofs of national decline. Some exceptions there were to this disheartening prospect; but they were only sufficient to render the torn and ragged evidences of poverty and its attendant — carelessness — more conspicuous. He left the knoll, knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and putting it into his waistcoat pocket, ascended a larger hill, which led to the graveyard where his child lay buried. On his way to this hill, which stood about half a mile distant, he passed a few houses of a humble description, with whose inhabitants he had been well ac-

quainted. Some of these stood nearly as he remembered them; but others were roofless, with their dark mud gables either fallen in or partially broken down. He surveyed their smoke-coloured walls with sorrow; and looked, with a sense of the transient character of all man's works, upon the chickweed, docks, and nettles which had shot up so rankly on the spot where many a chequered scene of joy and sorrow had flitted over the circumscribed circle of humble life, ere the annihilating wing of ruin swept away them and their habitations.

When he had ascended the hill his eye took a wider range. The more distant and picturesque part of the country lay before him. "Ay!" said he, in a soliloquy, "Lord bless us, how sthrange is this world!—an' what poor crathurs are men! There's the dark mountains, the hills, the rivers, an' the green glens, all the same; an nothin' else a'most but's changed! The very song of that blackbird, in thim thorn-bushes an' hazels below me, is like the voice of an ould friend to my ears. Och, indeed, hardly that, for even the voice of man changes; but that song is the same as I heard it for the best part o' my life. That mornin' star, too, is the same bright crathur up there that it ever was! God help us! Hardly anything changes but man, an' he seems to think that he can never change, if one is to judge by his thoughtlessness, folly, an' wickedness!"

A smaller hill, around the base of which went the same imperfect road that crossed the glen of Tubber Derg, prevented him from seeing the graveyard to which he was about to extend his walk. To this road he directed his steps. On reaching it he looked, still with a strong memory of former times, to the glen in which his children, himself, and his ancestors had all, during their day, played in the happy thoughtlessness of childhood and youth. But the dark and ragged house jarred upon his feelings. He turned from it with pain, and his eyes rested upon the still green valley with evident relief. He thought of his "buried flower"—"his goolden-haired darlin'," as he used to call her—and almost fancied that he saw her once more wandering waywardly through its tangled mazes, gathering berries, or strolling along the green meadow with a garland of gowans about her neck. Imagination, indeed, cannot heighten the image of the dead whom we love; but even if it could, there was no standard of ideal beauty in her father's mind beyond that of her own. She had been beautiful, but her beauty was pensive; a fair yet melancholy child; for the charm that ever encompassed her was one of sorrow and tenderness. Had she been volatile and mirthful, as children usually are, he would not have carried so far into his future life the love of her which he cherished. Another reason why he still loved her strongly was a consciousness that her death had been occasioned by distress and misery; for, as he said, when looking upon the scenes of her brief but melancholy existence—"Avourneen machree, I remimber to see you pickin' the berries; but asthore—asthore—it wasn't for play you did it; it was to keep away the cuttin' of hunger from your heart! Of all our childhre everyone said that *you* wor the M'Carthy—never sayin' much, but the heart in you ever full of goodness an

affection. God help me, I'm glad—an', now that I'm comin' near it, loth—to see her grave.'

He had now reached the verge of the graveyard. Its fine old ruin stood there as usual, but not altogether without the symptoms of change. Some persons had, for the purposes of building, thrown down one of its most picturesque walls. Still its ruins clothed with ivy, its mullions moss-covered, its gothic arches and tracery grey with age, were the same in appearance as he had ever seen them.

On entering this silent palace of death he reverently uncovered his head, blessed himself, and, with feelings deeply agitated, sought the grave of his beloved child. He approached it; but a sudden transition from sorrow to indignation took place in his mind, even before he reached the spot on which she lay. "Sacred Mother!" he exclaimed, "who has dared to bury in our ground? Who has—what villain has attimpted to come in upon the M'Carthys—upon the M'Carthy Mores, of Tubber Derg? Who could—had I no friend to prev—— eh? Sacred Mother, what's this? Father of Heaven forgive me? Forgive me, sweet Saviour, for this bad feelin' I got into! Who—who—could raise a head-stone over the darlin' o' my heart widout one of us knowin' it? Who—who could do it? But let me see if I can make it out. Oh, who could do this blessed thing for the poor an' the sorrowful?" He began, and with difficulty read as follows :—

"Here lies the body of Alice M'Carthy, the beloved daughter of Owen and Kathleen M'Carthy, aged nine years. She was descended from the M'Carthy Mores.

"Requiescat in pace.

"This head-stone was raised over her by widow Murray, and her son, James Murray, out of grateful respect for Owen and Kathleen M'Carthy, who never suffered the widow and orphan, or a distressed neighbour, to crave assistance from them in vain, until it pleased God to visit them with affliction."

"Thanks to you, my Saviour!" said Owen, dropping on his knees over the grave. "Thanks an' praise be to your holy name, that in the middle of my poverty—of all my poverty—I was not forgotten! nor my darlin' child let to lie widout honour in the grave of her family! Make me worthy, blessed Heaven, of what is written down upon me here! An' if the departed spirit of her that honoured the dust of my buried daughter is unhappy, oh, let her be relieved, an' let this act be remimbered to her! Bless her son, too, gracious Father, an' all belongin' to her on this earth! an', if it be your holy will, let them never know distress, or poverty, or wickedness!"

He then offered up a Pater Noster for the repose of his child's soul, and another for the kind-hearted and grateful Widow Murray, after which he stood to examine the grave with greater accuracy.

There was, in fact, no grave visible. The little mound, under which lay what was once such a touching image of innocence, beauty, and feeling, had sunk down to the level of the earth about it. He regretted this, inasmuch as it took away, he thought, part of her individuality. Still he knew it was the spot wherein she had been

buried, and with much of that vivid feeling, and strong figurative language, inseparable from the habits of thought and language of the old Irish families, he delivered the mother's message to the inanimate dust of her once beautiful and heart-loved child. He spoke in a broken voice, for even the mention of her name aloud, over the clay that contained her, struck with a fresh burst of sorrow upon his heart.

"Alley," he exclaimed, in Irish, "Alley, *nhien machree*, your father that loved *you* more nor he loved any other human crathur, brings a message to you from the mother of your heart, avourneen! She bid me call to see the spot where you're lyin', my buried flower, an' to tell you that we're not now, thanks be to God, as we wor whin you lived wid us. We are well to do now, *acushla oge machree*, an' not in hunger, an' sickness, an' misery, as we wor whin you suffered them all! You will love to hear this, pulse of our hearts, an' to know that, through all we suffered—an' bittherly we did suffer since you departed—we never let you out of our memory. No, *asthore villish*, we thought of you, an' cried afther our poor dead flower, many and many's the time. An' she bid me tell you, darlin' of my heart, that we feel nothin' now so much as that you are not wid us to share our comfort an' our happiness. Oh, what wouldn't the mother give to have you back wid her; but it can't be—an' what wouldn't I give to have you before my eyes agin, in health an' in life—but it can't be. The lovin' mother sent this message to you, Alley. Take it from her; she bid me tell you that we are well an' happy; our name is pure, and, like yourself, widout spot or stain. Won't you pray for us before God, an' get him an' his blessed Mother to look on us wid favour and compassion? Farewell, Alley, asthore! May you sleep in peace, an' rest on the breast of your great Father in heaven, until we all meet in happiness together. It's your father that's spakin' to you, our lost flower; an' the hand that often smoothed your goolden head is now upon your grave."

He wiped his eyes as he concluded, and after lifting a little of the clay from her grave, he tied it carefully up, and put it into his pocket.

Having left the graveyard, he retraced his steps towards Frank Farrell's house. The sun had now risen, and as Owen ascended the larger of the two hills which we have mentioned, he stood again to view the scene that stretched beneath him. About an hour before all was still; the whole country lay motionless, as if the land had been a land of the dead. The mountains, in the distance, were covered with the thin mists of morning; the milder and richer parts of the landscape had appeared in that dim grey distinctness which gives to distant objects such a clear outline. With the exception of the blackbird's song, everything seemed as if stricken into silence; there was not a breeze stirring; both animate and inanimate nature reposed as if in a trance; the very trees appeared asleep, and their leaves motionless, as if they had been of marble. But now the scene was changed. The sun had flung his splendour upon the mountain-tops, from which the mists were tumbling in broken fragments to the valleys

between them. A thousand birds poured their songs upon the ear; the breeze was up, and the columns of smoke from the farm-houses and cottages played, as if in frolic, in the air. A white haze was beginning to rise from the meadows; early teams were afoot; and labourers going abroad to their employment. The lakes in the distance shone like mirrors; and the clear springs on the mountain sides glittered in the sun like gems on which the eye could scarcely rest. Life and light and motion appear to be inseparable. The dew of morning lay upon nature like a brilliant veil, realising the beautiful image of Horace, as applied to woman :—

"Vultus nimium lubricus aspici."

By-and-by the songs of the early workmen were heard; nature had awoke; and Owen, whose heart was strongly, though unconsciously, alive to the influence of natural religion, participated in the general elevation of the hour, and sought with freshened spirits the house of his entertainer.

As he entered this hospitable roof, the early industry of his friend's wife presented him with a well-swept hearth and a pleasant fire, before which had been placed the identical chair that they had appropriated to his own use. Frank was enjoying "a blast o' the pipe," after having risen, to which luxury the return of Owen gave additional zest and placidity. In fact, Owen's presence communicated a holiday spirit to the family; a spirit, too, which declined not for a moment during the period of his visit.

"Frank," said Owen, "to tell you the thruth, I'm not half plased wid you this mornin'! I think you didn't thrate me as I ought to expect to be thrated."

"Musha, Owen M'Carthy, how is that?"

"Why, you said nothin' about Widow Murray raisin' a head-stone over our child. You kep' me in the dark there, Frank, an' sich a start I never got as I did this mornin', in the graveyard beyant."

"Upon my sowl, Owen, it wasn't my fau't, nor any of our fau'ts; for to tell you the thruth, we had so much to think and discoorse of last night that it never sthruck me, good or bad. Indeed, it was Bridget that put it first in my head, afther you wint out, an' thin it was too late. Ay, poor woman, the dacent strain was ever in her, the heavens be her bed!"

"Frank, if any one of her family was to abuse me till the dogs wouldn't lick my blood, I'd only give them back good for evil afther that. Oh, Frank, that goes to my heart! To put a head-stone over my weeny goolden-haired darlin', for the sake of the little thrifles I sarved thim in! Well!—may none belonging to her ever know poverty or hardship! but if they do, an' that I have it—— How-an'-iver, no matther. God bless thim! Wait till Kathleen hears it!"

"An' the best of it was, Owen, that she never expected to see one of your faces. But, Owen, you think too much about that child. Let us talk of something else. You seen Tubber Derg wanst more."

"I did; an' I love it still, in spite of the state it's in."

"Ah! it's different from what it was in your happy days. I was spakin' to Bridget about the farm, an' she advises us to go, widout losin' a minute, an' take it if we can."

"It's near this place I'll die, Frank. I'd not rest in my grave if I wasn't berrid among my own; so we'll take the farm if possible."

"Well, then, Bridget, hurry the breakfast, avourneen; an' in the name o' goodness, we'll set out, an' clinch the business this very day."

Owen, as we said, was prompt in following up his determinations. After breakfast they saw the agent and his father, for both lived together. Old Rogerson had been intimately acquainted with the M'Carthys, and, as Frank had anticipated, used his influence with the agent in procuring for the son of his old friend and acquaintance the farm which he sought.

"Jack," said the old gentleman, "you don't probably know the history and character of the Tubber Derg M'Carthys so well as I do. No man ever required the written bond of a M'Carthy; and it was said of them, and is said still, that the widow and orphan, the poor man or the stranger, never sought their assistance in vain. I, myself, will go security, if necessary, for Owen M'Carthy."

"Sir," replied Owen, I'm thankful to you; "I'm grateful to you. But I wouldn't take the farm, or bid for it at all, unless I could bring forrid enough to stock it as I wish, an' to lay in all that's wantin' to work it well. It ud be useless for me to take it—to struggle a year or two—impoverish the land—an' thin run away out of it. No, no; I have what'll put me upon it wid dacency an' comfort."

"Then, since my father has taken such an interest in you, M'Carthy, you must have the farm. We shall get leases prepared, and the business completed, in a few days; for I go to Dublin on this day week. Father, I now remember the character of this family; and I remember, too, the sympathy which was felt for one of them, who was narshly ejected, about seventeen or eighteen years ago, out of the lands on which his forefathers had lived, I understand, for centuries."

"I am that man, sir," returned Owen. "It's too long a story to tell now; but it was only out o' *part* of the lands, sir, that I was put. What I held was but a poor patch compared to what the family held in my grandfather's time. A great part of it went out of our hands at his death."

"It was very kind of you, Misther Rogerson, to offer to go security for him," said Frank; "but if security was wantin', sir, I'd not be willin' to let anybody but myself back him. I'd go all I'm worth in the world—an', be my sowl, double as much—for the same man."

"I know that, Frank, an' I thank you; but I could put security in Mr. Rogerson's hands here, if it was wanted. Good mornin', an' thank you both, gintlemen. To tell yees the thruth," he added, with a smile, "I long to be among my ould friends—manin' the people, an' the hills, an' the green fields of Tubber Derg—agin; an', thanks be to goodness, sure I will soon."

In fact, wherever Owen went, within the bounds of his native parish, his name, to use a significant phrase of the people, was before

him. His arrival at Frank Farrell's was now generally known by all his acquaintances, and the numbers who came to see him were almost beyond belief. During the two or three successive days, he went among his old "*croniens;*" and no sooner was his arrival at any particular house intimated than the neighbours all flocked to him. Scythes were left idle, spades were stuck in the earth, and work neglected for the time being; all crowded about him with a warm and friendly interest, not proceeding from idle curiosity, but from affection and respect for the man.

The interview between him and Widow Murray's children was affecting. Owen felt deeply the delicate and touching manner in which they had evinced their gratitude for the services he had rendered them; and young Murray remembered, with a strong gush of feeling, the distresses under which they lay when Owen had assisted them. Their circumstances, owing to the strenuous exertions of the widow's eldest son, soon afterwards improved; and, in accordance with the sentiments of hearts naturally grateful, they had taken that method of testifying what they felt. Indeed, so well had Owen's unparalleled affection for his favourite child been known that it was the general opinion about Tubber Derg that her death had broken his heart.

"Poor Owen! he's dead," they used to say; "the death of his weeny one, while he was away in Dublin, gave him the finishin' blow. It broke his heart."

Before the week was expired, Owen had the satisfaction of depositing the lease of his new farm, held at a moderate rent, in the hands of Frank Farrell, who, tying it up along with his own, secured it in "the black chest." Nothing remained now but to return home forthwith, and communicate the intelligence to Kathleen. Frank had promised, as soon as the Lacys should vacate the house, to come with a long train of cars and a number of his neighbours, in order to transfer Owen's family and furniture to his new dwelling. Everything, therefore, had been arranged, and Owen had nothing to do but hold himself in readiness for the welcome arrival of Frank and his friends.

Owen, however, had no sense of enjoyment when not participated in by his beloved Kathleen. If he felt sorrow, it was less as a personal feeling than as a calamity to her. If he experienced happiness, it was doubly sweet to him as reflected from his Kathleen. All this was mutual between them. Kathleen loved Owen precisely as he loved Kathleen. Nor let our readers suppose that such characters are not in humble life. It is in humble life, where the springs of feeling are not corrupted by dissimulation and evil knowledge, that the purest and tenderest and strongest virtues are to be found.

As Owen approached his home, he could not avoid contrasting the circumstances of his return *now* with those under which, almost broken-hearted after his journey to Dublin, he presented himself to his sorrowing and bereaved wife about sixteen years before. He raised his hat, and thanked God for the success which had, since that period, attended him; and immediately after his silent thanksgiving, entered the house.

His welcome, our readers may be assured, was tender and affectionate. The whole family gathered about him, and on his informing them that they were once more about to reside on a farm adjoining to their beloved Tubber Derg, Kathleen's contenance brightened, and the tear of delight gushed to her eyes.

"God be praised, Owen!" she exclaimed; "we will have the ould place afore our eyes, an' what is betther, we will be near where Alley is lyin'. But that's true, Owen," she added, "did you give the light of our hearts the mother's message?"

Owen paused, and his features were slightly overshadowed, but only by the solemnity of the feeling.

"Kathleen," said he, "I gave her your message; but, avourneen, I have sthrange news for you about Alley."

"What, Owen? What is it, acushla? Tell me quick?"

"The blessed child was not neglected: no, but she was honoured in our absence. A head-stone was put over her, an' stands there purtily this minute."

"Mother of glory, Owen!"

"It's thruth. Widow Murray an' her son Jemmy put it up, with words upon it that brought the tears to my eyes. Widow Murray is dead, but her childher's doin' well. May God bless an' prosper them, an' make her happy!"

The delighted mother's heart was not proof against the widow's gratitude, expressed, as it had been, in a manner so affecting. She rocked herself to and fro in silence, whilst the tears fell in showers down her cheeks. The grief, however, which this affectionate couple felt for their child was not always such as the reader has perceived it to be. It was rather a revival of emotions that had long slumbered, but never died; and the associations arising from the journey to Tubber Derg had thrown them back, by the force of memory, almost to the period of her death. At times, indeed, their imagination had conjured her up strongly; but the present was an epoch in the history of their sorrow.

There is little more to be said. Sorrow was soon succeeded by cheerfulness and the glow of expected pleasure, which is ever the more delightful as the pleasure is pure. In about a week their old neighbours, with their carts and cars, arrived; and before the day was closed on which Owen removed to his new residence, he found himself once more sitting at his own hearth, among the friends of his youth, and the companions of his maturer years. Ere the twelvemonth elapsed, he had his house perfectly white, and as nearly resembling that of Tubber Derg in its better days as possible. About two years ago we saw him one evening in the month of June, as he sat on a bench beside his door, singing with a happy heart his favourite song of "*Colleen dhas crootha na mo.*" It was about an hour before sunset. The house stood on a gentle eminence, beneath which a sweep of green meadow stretched away to the skirts of Tubber Derg. Around him was a country naturally fertile, and, in spite of the national depression, still beautiful to contemplate. Kathleen and two servant-

maids were milking, and the whole family were assembled about the door.

"Well, childher," said the father, "didn't I tell yees, the bitther mornin' we left Tubber Derg, not to cry or be disheartened—that 'there was a good God above, who might do somethin' for us *yet*'? I never *did* give up my trust in Him, an' I never *will*. You see, afther all our little throubles, he has wanst more brought us together, an' made us happy. Praise an' glory to his name!"

I looked at him as he spoke. He had raised his eyes to heaven, and a gleam of elevated devotion, perhaps worthy of being called sublime, irradiated his features. The sun, too, in setting, fell upon his broad temples and iron-grey locks with a light solemn and religious. The effect to me, who knew his noble character, and all that he had suffered, was as if the eye of God then rested upon the decline of a virtuous man's life with approbation; as if he had lifted up the glory of his countenance upon him. Would that many of his thoughtless countrymen had been present! They might have blushed for their crimes, and been content to sit and learn wisdom at the feet of Owen M'Carthy.

DENIS O'SHAUGHNESSY GOING TO MAYNOOTH.

YOUNG Denis O'Shaughnessy was old Denis's son; and old Denis, like many great men before him, was the son of his father and mother in particular, and of a long line of respectable ancestors in general. He was, moreover, a great historian, a perplexing controversialist, deeply read in Dr. Gallagher and Pastorini, and equally profound in the history of Harry the Eighth, and Luther's partnership with the devil, at that particular period when they invented the Protestant Church between them, and gave the Popeship of it to Her Holiness, Queen Elizabeth. Denis was a tall man, who from his peculiar appearance, and the nature of his dress—a light drab-coloured frieze—was nicknamed the walking pigeon-house; and truly on seeing him at a distance, a man might naturally enough hit upon a worse comparison. He was quite straight, carried both arms hanging by his sides, motionless and at their full length, like the pendulums of a clock that has ceased going. In his head, neck, and chest there was no muscular action visible; he walked, in fact, as if a milk-pail were upon his crown, or as if a single nod of his head would put the planets out of order. But the principal cause of the similarity lay in his roundness, which resembled that of a pump, running to a point, or the pigeon-house aforesaid, which is still better.

Denis, though a large man, was but a small farmer, for he rented

only eighteen acres of good land. His family, however, like himself, was large, consisting of thirteen children, among whom Denis junior stood preeminent. Like old Denis, he was exceedingly long-winded in argument, pedantic as the schoolmaster who taught him, and capable of taking a very comprehensive grasp of any tangible subject.

Young Denis's display of controversial talents was so remarkably precocious that he controverted his father's statements upon all possible subjects with a freedom from embarrassment which promised well for that most distinguished trait in a controversialist—hardihood of countenance. This delighted old Denis to the finger ends.

"Dinny, if he's spared," he would say, "will be a credit to us all yet. The sorra one of him but's as manly as anything, and as long-headed as a four-footed baste, so he is! Nothing daunts or dashes him, or puts him to an amplush: but he'll look you in the face so stout an' cute, an' never redden or stumble, whether he's right or wrong, but it does one's heart good to see him. Then he has such a laning to it, you see, that the crathur ud ground an argument on anything, thin draw it out to a narration, an' make it as clear as rock-water, besides insensing you so well into the rasonof the thing that Father Finnerty himself ud hardly do it betther from the althar.

The highest object of an Irish peasant's ambition is to see his son a priest. Whenever a farmer happens to have a 'arge family, he usually destines one of them for the Church, if his circumstances are at all such as can enable him to afford the boy a proper education. This youth becomes the centre in which all the affections of the family meet. He is cherished, humoured in all his caprices, indulged in his boyish predilections, and raised over the heads of his brothers, independently of all personal or relative merit in himself. The consequence is that he gradually becomes self-willed, proud, and arrogant, often to an offensive degree; but all this is frequently mixed up with a lofty bombast, and an undercurrent of strong disguised affection, that render his early life remarkably ludicrous and amusing. Indeed, the pranks of pedantry, the pretensions to knowledge, and the humour with which it is mostly displayed, render these scions of divinity, in their intercourse with the people until the period of preparatory education is completed, the most interesting and comical class, perhaps, to be found in the kingdom. Of these learned priestlings young Denis was undoubtedly a first-rate specimen. His father, a man of no education, was, nevertheless, as profound and unfathomable upon his favourite subjects as a philosopher; but this profundity raised him mightily in the opinion of the people, who admired him the more the less they understood him.

Now old Denis was determined that young Denis should tread in his own footsteps; and sooth to say, young Denis possessed as bright a talent for the dark and mysterious as the father himself. No sooner had the son commenced Latin with the intention of adorning the Church than the father put him in training for controversy. For a

considerable time the laurels were uniformly borne away by the veteran : but what will not learning do? Ere long the son got as far as syntax, about which time the father began to lose ground, in consequence of some ugly quotations which the son threw into his gizzard, and which unfortunately stuck there. By-and-by the father receded more and more, as the son advanced in his Latin and Greek, until, at length, their encounters were only resorted to for the purpose of showing off the son.

When young Denis had reached the age of sixteen or seventeen, he was looked upon by his father and his family, as well as by all their relations in general, as a prodigy. It was amusing to witness the delight with which the worthy man would call upon his son to exhibit his talents, a call to which the son instantly attended. This was usually done by commencing a mock controversy for the gratification of some neighbour to whom the father was anxious to prove the great talents of his son. When old Denis got the young *sogarth* fairly in motion, he gently drew himself out of the dispute, but continued a running comment upon the son's erudition, pointed out his good things, and occasionally resumed the posture of a controversalist, to reinspirit the boy if he appeared to flag.

"Dinny, abouchal, will you come up till Phadrick Murray hears you arguin' Scripther wid myself, Dinny. Now, Phadrick, listen, but keep your tongue sayin' nothin' ; jist lave us to ourselves. Come up, Dinny, till you have a hate at arguin' wid myself."

"Fadher, I condimnate you at once—I condimnate you as being a most ungrammatical ould man, an' not fit to argue wid anyone that knows Murray's English Grammar, an' more espaciously the three concords of Lilly's Latin one ; that is the cognation between the nominative case and the verb, the consanguinity between the substantive and the adjective, and the blood relationship that irritates between the relative and the antecedent."

"I tould you, Phadrick ! There's the boy that can rattle off the high English, and the larned Latin, jist as if he was born wid an English Dictionary in one cheek, a Latin Neksuggawn in the other, an' Doctor Gallagher's Irish Sarmons nately on the top of his tongue between the two."

"Fadher, but that unfortunately I am afflicted wid modesty, I'd blush *crocus* for your ignorance, as Virgil asserts in his Bucolics, *ut Virgilius ait in Bucolicis ;* and as Horatius, a book that I'm well acquainted wid, says in another place, '*Huc pertinent verba*,' says he, '*commodandi, comparandi, dandi, promittendi, solvendi imperandi nuntiandi, fidendi, obsequendi, minandi, irascendi, et iis contraria.*'"

"That's a good boy, Dinny ; but why would you blush for *my* ignorance, avourneen? Take care of yourself now, an' spake deep, for I'll out argue you at the heel o' the hunt, cute as you are."

"Why do I blush for your ignorance, is it? why, thin, I'm sure I have sound rasons for it : only think of the gross persivarance wid which you call that larned work, the Lexicon in Greek, a Necksuggan. Fadher, never attimpt to argue or display your ignorance wid me

again. But, moreover, I can probate you to be an ungrammatical man, from your own *modus* of argument."

"Go on, avourneen. Phadrick!"

"I'm listenin'. The sorra's no match for his cuteness, an' one's puzzled to think where he can get it all."

"Why, you don't know at all what I could do by larnin'. It would be no throuble to me to divide myself into two halves, an' argue the one agin the other."

"You would, in throth, Dinny."

"Ay, father, or cut myself acrass, an' dispute my head, maybe, agin my heels."

"Throth would you!"

"Or practise logic wid my right hand, and bate that agin wid my left."

"The sarra lie in it."

"Or read the Greek Tistament wid my right eye, an' thranslate it at the same time wid my left, according to the Greek an' English sides of my face, wid my tongue constrein' into Irish, unknownst to both o' them.

"Why, Dennis, he must have a head like a bell to be able to get into things."

"Throth an' he has that, an' 'ill make a noise in conthroversy yet, if he lives. Now, Dinny, let us have a hate at histhory."

"A hate at histhory?—wid all my heart; but before we begin, I tell you that I'll confound you precipitately; for you see, if you bate me in the English, I'll scarify you wid Latin, and give you a bang or two of Greek into the bargain. Och! I wish you'd hear the sackin' I gave Tom Reilly the other day; rubbed him down, as the masther says, wid a Greek towel, an' whenever I complimented him with the loan of a cut on the head, I always gave him a plaster of Latin to heal it; but the sorra worse healin' flesh in the world than Tom's is for the Latin, so I bruised a few Greek roots and laid them to his *caput* so nate that you'd laugh to see him. Well, is it histhory we are to begin wid? If it is, come on—advance. I'm ready for you—in protection—wid my guards up."

"Ha, ha, ha! Well, if he isn't the drollest crathur, an' so cute! But now for the *histhory*. Can you prove to me, upon a clear foundation, the differ atween black an' white, or prove that Phadrick Murray here, long life to him, is an ass? Now, Phadrick, listen, for you must decide betune us."

"Orra, have you no other larnin' than that to argue upon? Sure if you call upon me to decide, I must give it agin Dinny. Why, my judgment won't be worth a haporth, if he makes an ass of me!"

"What matther how you decide, man alive, if he proves you to be one; sure that's all we want. Never heed shakin' your head—listen an' it will be well worth your while. Why, man, you'll know more nor you ever knew or suspected before, when he proves you to be an ass."

"In the first place, fadher, you're ungrammatical in one word; instead of sayin' 'prove,' always say probate or probe; the word is de-

scinded, that is, the ancisthor of it is *probo*, a deep Greek word—*probo brobas*, *prob-ass*—that is to say, I'm to *probe* Phadrick here to be an *ass*. Now, do you see how pat I brought that in? That's the way, Phadrick, I chastise my fadher with the languages."

"In throth it is; go an, avick. Phadrick!"

"I'm listenin'."

"Phadrick, do you know the differ atween black an' white?"

"Atween black an' white? Hut, gorsoon, to be sure I do."

"Well, an' what might it be, Phadrick, my larned Athiop? What might it be, I negotiate?"

"Why, thin, the differ atween them is this, Dinny, that black is—let me see—why—that black is *not* red—nor yallow—nor brown—nor green—nor purple—nor cutbeard—nor a heather colour—nor a grogram ——"

"Nor a white?"

"Surely, Dinny, not a white, abouchal; don't think to come over me that way."

"But I want to know what colour it *is*, most larned sager."

"All rasonable, Dinny. Why, thin, black is—let me see—but, death alive!—it's—a—a—why, it's black, an' that's all I can say about it; yes, faix, I can—black is the colour of Father Curtis's coat."

"An' what colour is that, Phadrick?"

"Why, it's black to be sure."

"Well, now, what colour is white, Phadrick?"

"Why, it's a snow-colour; for all the world the colour of snow."

"White is?"

"Ay, is it."

"The dear help your head, Phadrick, if that's all you know about snow. In England, man, snow is an Oxford grey, an' in Scotland a pepper an' salt, an' sometimes a cutbeard, when they get a hard winther. I found that much in the Greek, anyway, Phadrick. Thry agin, you imigrant, I'll give you another chance—what colour is white?"

"Why, thin, it's—white—an' nothin' else. The sorra one but you'd puzzle a saint wid your long-headed screwtations from books."

"So, Phadrick, your preamble is that white is white, and black is black."

"Asy, avick. I said, sure enough, that white is white; but the black I deny—I said it was the colour of Father Curtis's black coat."

"Oh, you barbarian of the world, how I scorn your profundity an' emotions! You're a disgrace to the human sex by your superciliousness of knowledge, an' your various quotations of ignorance. *Ignorantia*, Phadrick, is your date an' superscription. Now, stretch out your ears, till I probate, or probe to you the differ atween black an' white."

"Phadrick!!" said the father.

"I'm listenin'."

"Now, Phadrick, here's the griddle, an' here's a clane plate. Do you see them here beside one another?"

"I'm lookin' at them."

"Now shut your eyes."

"Is that *your* way, Denis, of judgin' colours?"

"Shut your eyes, I say, till I give you *ocular* demonstration of the differ atween these two respectable colours."

"Well, they're shut."

"An' keep them so. Now, what differ do you *see* atween them?"

"The sorra taste, man alive; I never *seen* anything in my whole life so clearly of a colour as they are both this minute."

"Don't you see now, Phadrick, that there's not the smallest taste o' differ in them, an' that's accordin' to Euclid."

"Sure enough, Phadrick, that's the point settled. There's no discrimination at all atween black an' white. They're both of the same colour—so long as you keep your eyes shut."

"But if a man happens to open his eyes, Dinny?"

"He has no *right* to open them, Phadrick, if he wants to prove the truth of a thing. I should have said *probe*—but it does not significate."

"The heavens mark you to grace, Dinny. You did that in brave style. Phadrick, ahagur, he'll make the darlin' of an arguer when he gets the robes an him."

"I don't deny that; he'll be aquil to the best o' thim: still, Denis, I'd rather, whin I want to pronounce upon colours, that he'd let me keep my eyes open."

"Ay, but he did it out o' the books, man alive; and there's no goin' beyant thim. Sure he could prove it out o' the Divinity, if you went to that. An' what is still more, ne could, by shuttin' your eyes, in the same way prove black to be white, an' white black, jist as asy."

"Surely myself doesn't doubt it. I suppose, by shutting my eyes, the same lad could prove anything to me."

"But, Dinny, avourneen, you didn't prove Phadrick to be an ass yit. Will you do that by histhory, too, Dinny, or by the norrations of Illocution?"

"Father, I'm surprised at your gross imperception. Why, man, if you were not a *rara avis* of somnolency, a man of most frolicsome determinations, you'd be able to see that I've proved Phadrick to be an ass already."

"Throth, I deny that you did; there wasn't a word about my bein' an ass in the last discoorse. It was all upon the differ atween black an' white."

"Oh, how I scorn your gravity, man! *Ignorantia*, as I said, is your date an' superscription; an' when you die you ought to go an' engage a stone-cutter to carve you a headstone, an' make him write on it, *Hic jacet Ignorantius Redivivus.* An' the translation of that is, accordin' to Publius Virgilius Maro—'Here lies a quadruped who didn't know the differ atween black an' white.'"

"But, Dinny, won't you give us the histhory of how the Protestant Church was invinted by the divil an' Luther, backed by Harry the Aighth, while he was a Protestant? Give it to Phadrick, Dinny, till he hears it."

"Yes, my worthy *paterfamilias*, it shall be done; but upon the

hypothesis of your taciturnity. *Experientia docet*—which is, on bein' rendered into vernacularity, "You are too much addicted to intherruption, an' throw the darkness of your intellect over the splendour of my narrations."

"But afore you go on, Dinny, will you thranslate *doshet* for Phadrick?"

"Fadher, I'll tolerate incongruity in no man. If you must become jocular, why go an' larn Latin an' Greek to substantiate your jocularity. Become erudite for yourself, an' tell the story to your friends; but I vow to Demosthenes, if you provoke me I'll unsluice the floodgates of my classicality, an' bear you off like a sthraw on the surface of my larned indignation."

"Well, I won't, Dinny; I won't, avick. I'll say nothin' barrin' listen. Phadrick, isn't that the larnin'?"

"Bedad, it couldn't be bate."

"Well! is it the history of the confab atween Luther an' the invintor o' the long-tailed heresy I'm to give you?"

"But why was it long-tailed, Dinny? Tell that to Phadrick."

"Fadher, I tould you before that I'll not tolerate incongruity in any man who is ignorant of the classics. Was it not that Phadrick Murray's ignorance protects you, I'd take the liberty of lettin' you contemplate your own impenetrability to admonition. I call the Protestant heresy long-tailed for three reasons: first—*id est—primo*——"

"Phadrick!!!"

"I'm list'nin'!"

"*Primo*—Because it was not short. *Secundo*—Because the dragon that invinted it in the Revelations had a tail that reached over the third part of heaven. *Tertio*—Because the divil, who was joint partner wid the dragon, never goes widout a switcher; so that it is from the purest of logic I call it the long-tailed heresy. Are you now satisfied?"

"Throth, we are, avick. Isn't that the larnin', Phadrick?"

"Bedad, he's as ould as Killileagh bog, all but one bank."

"Well! *Quid multis?* Luther was sittin' one evenin' in his *studium* or study, afther havin' secured a profound dinner; one foot was upon the hob, an' the other in the most convanient place, of coorse. One elbow was placed upon a round black table, near a decanther of wine an' a bottle of Ennishowen whisky. I will not purtind to say which he was most in the habit of drinkin', lest I might glide into veracity. Ovid says, in his Metamorphoses, that tradition is in favour of the whisky. His words are—'*Lutherus semper potavit merum Ennishonum*,' which has puzzled the commentators very much. St. Augustin, who was a good judge, thinks that 'merum Ennishonum' means the 'pure native,' which, he says, is jolly drink. Paul the Hermit, an' St. Anthony, on the other hand, say that 'merum Ennishonum' is incorrect; for that had he stuck, as they did, to 'merum Ennishonum,' he would never have left the Church. Others read clarum Ennishonum;' however, it does not significate. There he sat,

as I have chalked him out for you, in a state of relaxation, frolicsome an' solitary, wid his countenance placid an' bloomin', his rosy, semi-demi-quaver dewlap dependin' from his chin, just ripe for meditation an' a tumbler.

"'Now, Luther, you sinner,' says he, lookin' over at his own shadow upon the wall beyant—'Luther,' says he, 'here you sit, wid a good coat to your back, good shoes to your feet, good Connemara stockins to your legs, and excellent linen undher your penitential hair-cloth shirt. What more do you want, you knave, you?' says he, continuin' to hould a logical controversy wid himself. 'I say, you born desaver,' says he, 'what is it you would be at? Maybe it's a fat mithre you'd be smellin' afther? But I doubt,' says he, 'that an ecclesiastical union between your head an' a mithre was never intinded to be *in rerum natura*.'"

"Phadrick!!!"

"I'm list'nin'!"

"'What would you be at then?' says he, carryin' on the controversy: 'haven't you enough o' the world? Haven't you ase an' indepindence, an' susceptibility, an' tergiversation, not to mintion that a fast dinner wid you would make a faste for a layman! Go off wid you,' says he to a fly that was leadin' a party of pleasure towards his nose, 'go 'long wid you, you sinner, an' don't be timptin' me! The fact or *factum* is, Luther,' says he——"

"Dinny, thranslate whack'dem for Phadrick."

"Fadher, you're incorrigible. Why, *factum's* a fact, an' so is what I'm relatin'. 'The fact or *factum* is, Luther,' says he, 'that you are anxious to thranslate some honest man's daughter into an *uxor* for yourself. You are,' says he, 'you born sconce; an' you're puzzlin' your *pincal gland* how to effectuate the *vinculum matrimonii*.' He was thinkin', too, at the time, of a small taste of a vow—*votum* it is in the larned languages—that he had to dispose of at first cost, because the shabby intintion was in him. But no matther: it was all the same to honest Luther in the Greek.

"'Hould up your anterior countenance,' says he, 'an' look yourself straight in the face widout blushin', if you can.'"

"What's the manin' of antlerian countenance, Dinny?"

"It signifies, fadher, that part of the human *caput* upon which the faces of most single-faced gintlemen are to be found."

"An' where do thim that have two faces keep the second, Dinny?"

"Did you never hear of the *facies Hypocritica*, an' the *facies atra?* The *facies Hypocritica* is worn over the *facies atra*, like a mask on a blackamoor. The former, fadher, is for the world in general, an' the latter for private use, when the wearer happens to practise a thrifle in the reflectin' style. These belong to the double-faced gintlemen. There is a third, called the *facies candida*, which every fool an' knave can look through; but it's not worth washin'. I wouldn't give three sthraws for the *facies candida*. No, no; commend me to the other two."

"Sure they say, Dinny, two heads is betther than one; an' so, of coorse, is two faces."

"Right, fadher. *Saltem recte dixisti.* I'll practise wid both myself, plase the fates."

"Throth, you will, avick."

"'Well,' the Reformer proceeded, 'Luther, how are we to manage? You're health! in the meantime,' says he, puttin' the dilution to his lips. 'Our best plan, at all evints, is to dhrink upon it. It's a hard subject, an' requires to be softened by the moisture, so as to make it tractable. The fact is,' he went on, 'that you're gettin' frolicsome on my hands—you are, you sinner; and have a tendency to make some honest man's daughter flesh of your flesh, an' bone of your bone, by effectin' the *vinculum.* Isn't that the case, Luther?'

"'Faith, I bleeve so,' said he to himself; 'but I'd give a thrifle to know in what manner I could accomplish the union. However, the fact cannot be denied that I'm runnin' fast into *uxoriety*, an' will marry, if the whole Christian world should become champions of abnegation. There's nothin' like a plural life,' says Luther. 'I'll not only live in my own person, but by proxy, as the bishops an' cardinals go to heaven.'

"In this manner was Luther debatin' the subject wid himself, assisted by the dilution, when a grave-looking man, in the garbage of a monk, walked in to him. He had all the appearance of a steady, sober ecclesiastic; his countenance was what they call a slate-colour—'*vultus slate-colorius*,' as Jugurtha says when giving an account of the transaction to Cornelius Agrippa, the centurion.

"'*Salve Lutherum*,' says the *peregrinus;* which is, 'Good-morrow, Luther.

"'*Tu sis salvus quoque*,' says Luther, back to him; which is, 'Good-morrow, an' good luck.'"

"Phadrick!!"

"I'm list'nin'."

"'Won't you take a sate, brother,' says Luther, 'an' be sated.'

"'Thank you kindly, brother,' replied the other. They called each other brothers, because the stranger was dressed, as I said, in the garbage of a monk, the vagrant. 'Thank you kindly,' says he; 'an' if you'll allow me, I'll also take a tumbler of Ennishowen,' says he, 'bein' a little warm an' thirsty afther my walk.'

"'You're as welcome as the flowers o' May,' says Luther, 'to the best in my house. Katty, get another tumbler an' more hot wather, an' place a chair over there on the opposite side o' the table. I'm sorry, brother,' says he, 'that I haven't somethin' betther to offer you; but the thruth is, this bein' a fast day wid me, I had only a cut o' salmon, an' two or three other things, more in the shape of a collation than a dinner—not but that I came undher the exception, an' might have ate meat; for, indeed, I wasn't to say too well to-day. However, I always think it right to observe the rules o' the Church, an' to practise macerosity an' timperance. Here's to our betther acquaintance!'

"'Thank you kindly, an' here's ditto,' says the other. 'I'm much of your way o' thinkin' myself,' says he, 'an' think it both clerical an' churchmanlike to mortify myself upon turbot, salmon, or any other miserable substitute for a dinner that smacks of penance: though, in-

deed, like yourself, I wasn't to say well to-day, bein' rather feverish, an' might have practised the exception too.'

"'In that case, then,' said Luther, 'I'll ordher down a couple of fat pullets an' a ham for supper. You know we're commanded to observe hospitality towards God's saints; but in case you have a scruple about the exception, why I'll absolve you, an' you'll absolve me, so that, after all, it won't signify. The thing's as long as it's short,' says Luther. 'Shud orth!' says he, puttin' the dilution to his lips agin.

"'Here's to your best wishes!' says the other. 'Yes, Luther,' says he, with a sigh of devotion: 'there's nothin' like humility an' carnation in a religious ministher. We have weighty duties to perform, an' we ought to see that the practice of self-denial is properly theorized in our own persons, an' its theory reduced to practicality by the hardened laity, who would ate an' dhrink like ourselves, an' encroach upon our other privileges widout remorse, as if they had a right to them. They would ate like bastes, an' dhrink like fishes, Luther, if we allowed them,' says he. 'Here's to you!'

"'They would, the vulgarians,' says Luther. 'Katty, more hot wather; an', Katty, asthore, put down two of the fattest of them crammed pullets, an' a ham, an' have them ready for supper, an' fetch another bottle of Ennishowen; afther which, Katty, we'll give you a dispensation for absence until supper time. Well but, my worthy,' says Luther, 'what's your opinion of clerical affairs in general? Don't you think they're in a bad state?'

"'Not at all,' says the other. 'I think they're just as they ought to be.'

"'I doubt that,' says Luther. 'The infarior clargy laid undher great restrictions, in quensequence of their poverty. Look at the cardinals, an' bishops, an' rich abbots! Why, they've a monopoly of all that the world's good for.'

"'Thrue,' said the *peregrinus*."

"Phadrick!!!"

"I'm list'nin'!"

"'Thrue,' says the *peregrinus*, 'an' my wish is to see that broken down.'

"'An' so is mine,' says Luther. 'They won't allow us infarior clargy to take wives to ourselves, though they're not ashamed to carry comforters about their necks in the open face of day. A poor clerical now can't afford to be licentious, for want o' money.'

"'Thrue; an' I would wish to see it made chape,' says the other, 'if it was only to vex the wealthy.'

"'You know as well as I do,' says Luther, 'that profligacy at present is at an extravagant price. The rich can afford to buy themselves dispensations for a month's or three months' licentiousness, or from a year's to seven years' indulgence, or seven hundred years', for that matther, if they lay down the cash; but wid us it's different: we can't afford to purchase the right to sin an' threspass, yet we won't be allowed to marry. Now I'm determined to rescue the people an' the dhrudgin' clargy from this tyranny.'

"'Then you'd wish to see the clargy married, an' dispensations taken away?'

"'To be sure I would; an' an interesting sight it ud be, to see the rogues, every man wid a legal doxy undher his arm. I tell you, the *vinculum* must be effected.'

"'I have no objection to the *vinculum*,' replied the *advena*, 'for it's all the same thing in the end. How do you think it could be brought about?'

"Luther, who was meditatin' upon the subject in the time, didn't hear him.

"'I'll hould you a gallon of Roscrea to a gallon of Ennishowen,' says the strange monk, 'that I could put you on a plan of havin' them married in scores—ay, in dhroves.'

"'If you do,' says Luther, 'I'll say you're a cleverer man than I am.'

"'Do you know much about England?' says the sthranger.

"'A thrifle,' says Luther.

"'Well,' says the other, 'there's Harry the Aighth goin' to put away his wife, an' to take another in her place. Now's your time,' says he, 'strike while the iron's hot. He's at loggerheads wid the Pope an' the Church in gineral, an' will defend the right o' marrying to the last day of his life. Broach the subject now, Luther, an' he's the boy will support it.'

"'Give me your hand,' says Luther: 'eh, St. Pether! but your palm's burnin'.'

"'Not at all,' says the other, 'I'm naturally hot; besides, as I said a while ago, I'm a thrifle faverish. Will you take my hint?'

"'Would a cat take new milk?' says Luther.

"'Well then,' says the other, 'I'll give you some advice.'"

"But, Dinny," said the father, "wasn't all the two thieves said about the Church lies?"

"Every word of it a lie—as gross as Luther himself. There was no such thing as tyranny, or persecution, or overgrown wealth in the Church then, at all. No man ud be punished for not thinkin' or spakin' accordin' as the Church commanded. The clargy were as mild as lambs, an' didn't lord it over or trample upon the people, good or bad. If a washerwoman was to summon a bishop for his quarther's washin', he'd attend like any other man, an' pay down the money, if he had it, or if he hadn't, he'd give it to her at half a crown a week; so that Luther, the dirty vagrant, had no grounds for makin' such a schism in the Church as he did."

"Phadrick, there's the knowledge!"

"Bedad, it bangs!"

"The *advena* thin instructed Luther at a great rate, tellin' him how he'd get on wid his heresy, an' many other things o' that nature. Luther, however, began to feel unasy where he sat. He first put one finger to his nosthril, afther that his thumb to the other, lookin' arnestly at the monk all the time.

"'I beg your pardon,' says he, 'but maybe you'd take the other

side o' the room ; I think you'd find yourself more comfortable in it. There's a blast o' wind from your side,' says he, 'that's not pleasant somehow.'

"'Oh, that ud be too much throuble,' says the other : 'I'm very well where I am.'

"'No throuble in life, to me,' says Luther, 'but the conthrary. I find that I'm no sich theologian as you are ; an' I think it but right that you should keep me at as respectful a distance as possible. I'll thank you to take the other side o' the room, I say ; or indeed, for that matther, if you sat on the outside for some time, it ud be as well. A thrifle o' fresh air ud sarve us both.'

"'Why, you're too delicate entirely,' said the stranger.

"'Don't stand on ceremony wid me,' says Luther ; 'you may go out like shot, an' I'll never say ill you did it. St. Pether, what's this at all!'

"He then looked at the monk, an' saw a grim sneer upon his face : his eyes, too, began to blaze, an' a circle o' fire played round his head. Another peep undher the table showed Luther the cloven foot, an' a long tail coiled round the chair. Luther, however, was a hardened sinner that there was no puttin' fear into ; so he instantly whipped up the poker that had been stickin' between the bars, an', of coorse, red hot : an' the monk, seein' him about to commence the attack, took the liberty of rethratin' in double-quick time.

"'Ha!' exclaimed Luther, 'there you go, you common vagabone ; but a sweet perfume do you lave behind you!'

"Now, Phadrick, that's the way the Protestant Church was invinted by the divil an' Martin Luther. Harry the Aighth, an' his daughther Elizabeth, who was then Queen o' Scotland, both came in an' supported him aftherwards."

"Well, by the livin', Dinny, I dunna where you get all this deep readin'!"

"Sure he gets it all in the Dixonary."

"Bedad, that Dixonary must be a fine book entirely, to thim that can undherstand it."

"But, Dinny, will you tell Phadrick the Case of Conscience atween Barny Branagan's two goats an' Para Ghastha's mare?"

"Fadher, if you were a grammarian I'd castigate your incompatibility as it desarves—I'd lay the scourge o' syntax upon you, as no man ever got it since the invintion o' the nine parts o' speech. By what rule of logic can you say that aither Barny Branagan's goats or Parra Ghastha's mare had a conscience? I tell you it wasn't they had the conscience, but the divine who decided the difficulty. Phadrick, lie down till I illusthrate."

"How is that, Dinny? I can hear you sittin'."

"Lie down, you reptile, or I shall decline the narration altogether."

"Arra, lie down, Phadrick ; sure he only wants to show you the rason o' the thing."

"Well, well ; I'm down. Now, Dinny, don't let your feet be too tarned, if you plase."

"Silence!—*taceto!* you reptile. Now, Phadrick, here, on this side o' you, lies Barny Branagan's field ; an' there, on that side, lies a field of Parra Ghastha's : you're the ditch o' mud betuxt them."

"The ditch o' mud ! Faix, that's dacent !"

"Now here, on Barny Branagan's side, feeds Parra Ghastha's mare ; an' there, on Parra Ghastha's side, feed Barny Branagan's goats. Do you comprehend ? Do you insinuate ?"

"I do—I do. Death alive ! there's no use in punchin' my sides wid your feet that way."

"Well, get up now an' set your ears."

"Now listen to him, Phadrick !"

"It was one night in winter, when all nature shone in the nocturnal beauty of tenebrosity : the sun had set about three hours before ; an', accordin' to the best logicians, there was a dearth of light. It's the general opinion of philosophers—that is, of the soundest o' them—that when the sun is down, the moon an' stars are usually up ; an' so they were on the night that I'm narratin' about. The moon was, wid great respect to her character, night-walkin' in the sky ; and the stars vegetated in celestial genuflexion around her. Nature, Phadrick, was in great state ; the earth was undher our feet, an' the sky above us. The frost, too, was hard, Phadrick, the air keen, an' the grass tendher. All things were enrobed wid verisimilitude an' scrupulosity. In this manner was the terraqueous part of our system, when Parra Ghastha's mare, after havin' taken a cowld collation on Barny Branagan's grass, was returnin' to her master's side o' the merin ; an' Barny Branagan's goats, havin' tasted the sweets of Parra Ghastha's cabbages, were on their way acrass the said merin to their own side. Now it so happened that they met exactly at a narrow gap in the ditch behind Rosha Halpin's house. The goats, bein' coupled together, got one on each side of the rift, wid the rope that coupled them extended acrass it. The mare stood in the middle of it, so that the goats were in the way of the mare, an' the mare in the way of the goats. In the meantime they surveyed one another wid great composure, but had neither of them the politeness to stir, until Rosha Halpin came suddenly out, an' emptied a vessel of untransparent wather into the ditch. The mare, who must have been an animal endowed wid great sensibility of soul, stooped her head suddenly at the noise ; an' the goats, who were equally sentimental, gave a start from nervishness. The mare, on raisin' her head came in contact wid the cord that united the goats ; an' the goats, havin' lost their commandin' position, came in contact wid the neck o' the mare. *Quid multis?* They pulled an' she pulled, an' she pulled an' they pulled, until at length the mare was compelled to practise the virtue of resignation in the ditch, wid the goats about her neck. She died by suspinsion ; but the mettlesome ould crathur, wid a love of justice that did her honour, hanged the goats in requital ; for they departed this vale of tears on the mountain-side along wid her, so that they had the satisfaction of dyin' a social death together. Now, Phadrick, you quadruped, the case of conscience is, whether Parra Ghastha has a right to make restitution to Barny Branagan for the loss of

his goats, or Barny Branagan to Parra Ghastha for the loss of his mare?"

"Bedad, that's a puzzler!"

"Isn't it, Phadrick? But wait till you hear how he'll clear it up! Do it for Phadrick, Dinny."

"Yis, Phadrick, I'll illusthrate your intellects by divinity. You see, Phadrick, you're to suppose me to be in the chair, as Confessor. Very well—or *valde*, in the larned languages—Parra Ghastha comes to confess to me, an' tells me that Barny Branagan wants to be paid for his goats. I tell him it's a disputed point, an' that the price o' the *goats* must go to the Church. On the other hand, Barny Branagan tells me that Parra Ghastha wishes to be paid for his mare. I say, again, it's a disputed point, an' that the price o' the *mare* must go to the Church—the amount of the proceeds to be applied in prayer towards the benefit of the parties in the first instance, an' of the faithful in general aftherwards."

"Phadrick!!!"

"Oh, that I may never, but he bates the globe!"

Denny's character is a very common one in the remote parts of Ireland, where knowledge is novelty, and where the slightest tinge of learning is looked upon with such reverence and admiration as can be properly understood only by those who have an opportunity of witnessing it. Indeed, few circumstances prove the great moral influence which the Irish priesthood possess over the common people more forcibly than the extraordinary respect paid by the latter to such as are designed for the "mission." The moment the determination is made, an incipient sanctity begins, as it were, to consecrate the young priest, and a high opinion of his learning and talents to be entertained, no matter how dull he may be, so far as honest nature is concerned. Whatever he says is sure to have some hidden meaning in it, that would be highly edifying if they themselves understood it. But their own humility comes in here to prop up his talents; and whatsoever perplexity there may be in the sense of what he utters is immediately attributed to learning altogether beyond *their* depth.

Love of learning is a conspicuous principle in an Irish peasant; and in no instance is it seen to greater advantage than when the object of it appears in the "makins of a priest." Among all a peasant's good and evil qualities, this is not the least amiable. How his eye will dance in his head with pride, when the young priest thunders out a line of Virgil or Homer, a sentence from Cicero, or a rule from syntax! And with what complacency and affection will the father and relations of such a person, when sitting during a winter evening about the hearth, demand from him a translation of what he repeats, or a grammatical analysis, in which he must show the dependencies and relations of word upon word—the concord, the verb, the mood, the gender, and the case; into every one and all of which the learned youth enters with an air of oracular importance, and a polysyllabicism of language that fails not in confounding them with astonishment and edification. Neither does Paddy confine himself to Latin or Greek, for his curiosity

in hearing a little upon all known branches of human learning is boundless. When a lad is *designed* for the priesthood, he is, as if by a species of intuition, supposed to know more or less of everything; astronomy, fluxions, Hebrew, Arabic, and the black art are subjects upon which he is frequently expected to dilate; and vanity scruples not, under the protection of their ignorance, to lead the erudite youth through what they believe to be the highest regions of imagination, or the profoundest depths of science and philosophy.

It is, indeed, in those brilliant moments, when the young priest is launching out in full glory upon some topic of which he knows not a syllable, that it would be a learned luxury to catch him. These flights, however, are very pardonable, when we consider the importance they give him in the eyes of his friends, and reflect upon that lofty and contemptuous pride, and those delectable sensations, which the appearance of superior knowledge gives to the pedant, whether raw or trained, high or low, in this profession or the other. It matters little that such a feeling dilates the vanity in proportion to the absence of real knowledge or good sense: it is not real but affected knowledge we are writing about. Pride is confined to no condition; nor is the juvenile pedantry of a youth upon the hob of an Irish chimney-corner much different from the pride which sits upon the brow of a worthy Lord Mayor, freshly knighted, lolling with strained dignity beside his honourable brother, the mace, during a city procession; or of a Lady Mayoress, when she reads upon a dead-wall her own name, flaming in yellow capitals, at the head of a subscription ball; or, what is better still, the contemptuous glance which, while about to open the said ball, her ladyship throws at that poor creature and upstart—the sheriff's wife.

In addition, however, to the enjoyment of this assumption of profound learning which characterises the young priest, a different spirit, considerably more practical, often induces him to hook in other motives. The learning of Denis O'Shaughnessy, for intance, blazed with peculiar lustre whenever he felt himself out at elbows; for the logic with which he was able to prove the connection between his erudition and a woollen-draper's shop was, like the ignorance of those who are to be saved, invincible. Whenever his father considered a display of the son's powers in controversy to be *capital*, Denis, who knew the *mollia tempora fandi*, applied to him for a hat. Whenever he drew a heretic as a person who will be found hereafter without the wedding garment, and clinched the argument with half a dozen quotations from syntax or Greek grammar, he uniformly came down upon the father for a coat, the cloth of which was fine in proportion to the web of logic he wove during the disputation. Whenever he seated himself in the chair of rhetoric, or gave an edifying homily on prayer, with such eloquence as rendered the father's admiration altogether inexpressible, he applied for a pair of small-clothes; and if, in the excursiveness of his vigorous imagination he travelled anywhere beyond the bounds of common sense, he was certain to secure a pair of shoes.

This, of course, did not escape the satirical observation of the neighbours, who commented upon the circumstance with that good-

humour which renders their mother-wit so pleasant and spicy. The scenes where many of these displays took place varied according to the occurrence of those usual incidents which diversify country life. Sometimes old Denis's hearth was selected, at others a neighbouring wake-house, and not unfrequently the chapel-green, where, surrounded by a crowd of eager listeners, the young priest and his Latin would succeed in throwing the hedge-schoolmaster and his problems completely into the shade.

The father's pride, on these occasions, always prompted him to become the aggressor; but he only did this to draw out the talents of his son to more advantage. Never was man foiled with less regret than old Denis; nor did ever man more bitterly repent those little touches of vanity, which sometimes induced him, when an opportunity of prostrating Denny arrived, to show what he *could* have done, by giving the son's argument an unexpected brain-blow. These accidental defeats always brought the son more than he lost by them; for the father usually made him a peace-offering in the shape of pocket-money, books, or clothes. The great amusement of the peasantry around the chapel-green of a Sunday was to hear the father and son engaged in argument; and so simple was the character of both that their acquaintances declared they could know by the state of young Denis's coat, and the swaggering grasp with which old Denis held his staff, that an encounter was about to take place.

"Young Shaughnessy's gettin' bare," they would observe; "there'll be hard arguin' till he gets the clothes. He's puttin' in for a black coat now, he's so grave. Go on, Denny," they would say again: "more power an' a dacenter sleeve to your elbow. Stick to him!—very good!—that's a clincher!—you're gone beyond the skirts, Denny!—let him pocket that larnin'! Dinis, you're bate, body an' slaves![1]—you're no match for the gorsoon, Dinis. Good agin, abouchal!—that's puttin' the collar on it!" And so on, varying the phrase according to the whim of the moment.

Nothing gave the father greater pleasure than these observations, although the affected earnestness with which he encountered the son, and his pretended indignation at those who affirmed him to have been beaten, were highly amusing to the bystanders.

Such discussions were considered highly edifying and instructive by them, and they were sometimes at a loss whether to give the palm of ingenuity and eloquence to the father or Denny. The reader, however, must not suppose that the contemptuous expressions scattered over Denny's rhetorical flourishes, when discussing these points with his father, implied want of reverence or affection—far from it. On the contrary, the father always liked him the better for them, inasmuch as they proved Denny's vast superiority over himself. They were, therefore, only the licences and embellishments of discussion, tolerated and encouraged by him to whom they were applied.

Denny at length shot up to the stature of a young man, probably

[1] Altogether—completely.

about eighteen; and during the two last years of his school studies he presented a considerable if not a decidedly marked change in his character and external appearance. His pride became more haughty, and the consciousness of his learning, and of the influence annexed to the profession for which he was intended, put itself forth with less discussion but more energy. His manners and attitude became constrained; the expression of his face began to darken, and to mould itself into a stiff, gloomy formality that was strongly calculated to conceal the natural traits of his character. His dress, too, had undergone a great improvement; for instead of wearing shop blue or brown, he wore good black broadcloth, had a watch in his fob, a respectable hat, and finer linen.

This change, now necessary in consequence of his semi-clerical character, influenced him through every relation of life. His nearest friends, whilst their pride in him increased, fell off to a more respectful distance; and his deportment, so far from being that of the good-humoured Bobadil of polemics and pedantry upon all known and unknown subjects, became silent and solemn, checkered only during the moments of family conviviality by an excessive flow of that pleasant and still incomprehensible learning for the possession of which he had so honestly earned himself a character. Much of his pedantry was now lopped off, it is true, because the pride of his station prevented him from entering into discussions with the people. It cost him, however, some trouble to overcome his early tendencies; nor, after all, can it be affirmed that he altogether suceeeded in eradicating them. Many a grave shrug, and solemn wink, and formal nod had he to answer for, when his foot touched the debateable land of controversy. Though contrary to the keeping and dignity of his position in life, yet did honest Denny then get desperately significant, and his face amazingly argumentative. Many a pretender has he fairly annihilated by a single smile of contempt that contained more logic than a long argument from another man. In fact, the whole host of rhetorical figures seemed breaking out of his face. By a solitary glance of his eye he could look a man into a dilemma, and practise a *sorites*, or a home-made syllogism, by the various shiftings of his countenance, as clearly as if he had risen to the full flight of his former bombast. He had, in short, a *primâ facie* disposition to controversy; his nose was set upon his face in a kind of firm defiance against infidels, heretics, and excommunicated persons; and when it curled with contempt of another, or with pride in the power that slumbered in itself, it seemed to give the face from which it projected, and the world at large, the assurance of a controversialist. Nor did his negative talents rest here: a twist of his mouth to the right or left ear was nicely shaded away into a negative or affirmative, according as he intended it should be taken; and when he used his pocket-handkercief he was certain, though without uttering a syllable, to silence his opponent, so contemptuously did his intonations rout the arguments brought against him. The significance and force of all these were heightened by the mystery in which they were wrapped; for whenever unbending decorum

constrained him to decline the challenges of the ignorant, with whom discussion would now be degradation, what could he do to soothe his vanity, except, as the poet says, with folded arms and a shaking of the head to exclaim—"*Well, well, we know;*" or, "*We could, an if we would;*" or, "*If we list to speak;*" or, "*There be, an if they might;*" which left the imaginations of his hearers at liberty to conceive more fully of those powers which his modesty declined exhibiting. For some time before he got absolutely and finally into black even his father gave up his accustomed argument in despair. The son had become an adept in all the intricacies and obscurities of Latin, and literally overwhelmed the old man with small inundations of that language, which, though, like all inundations, rather muddy, yet were quite sufficient to sweep the worthy veteran before them.

Young Denis O'Shaughnessy was now pretty nearly finished at school, that is say, almost fit for Maynooth; his studies, though higher, were less assiduous; his leisure was consequently greater; and it is well known that a person of his character is never asked to work, except it be his own pleasure to labour a day or two by way of amusement. He might now be seen walking of a warm day along the shady sides of the hedges, with a book in his hand, or stretched listlessly upon the grass, at *study;* or sauntering about among the neighbouring workmen, with his fore-finger between the leaves of his book, a monument of learning and industry.

It is not to be supposed, however, that Denis, who was an Irishman of eighteen, handsome and well made, could be altogether insensible to female beauty and the seductive charms of the sex. During his easy saunterings—or, as the Scotch say, "daunerings"—along the road and about the green hedges, it often happened that he met a neighbour's daughter; and Denis, who, as a young gentleman of breeding, was bound to be courteous, could not do less than accost her with becoming urbanity.

"Good mornin', Miss Norah," we will suppose him to say, when meeting a good-looking, arch girl of his acquaintance.

"Good morrow, Mr. O'Shaughnessy. I hope you're well, sir?"

"Indeed, I am, at present, in superlatively ecclesiastical health, Miss Norah. I hope all *your* family are well?"

"All very well, I thank you, sir, barrin' myself."

"An' pray what's the matter wid you, Miss Norah? I hope" (with an exceeding grave but complacent smile) "you're not affected wid the amorous passion of love?"

"Oh, that ud be tellin', Mr. O'Shaughnessy! But supposin' I am, what ought I to do?"

"That's really a profound question, Miss Norah. But though I cannot tell you what to do, I can tell you what I think."

"An' what is that, sir?"

"Why, Miss Norah, that he who is so beatified as to secure you in the matrimonial paction—*compactum* it is in the larned languages—in other words—to condescend to your capacity—he who is married to you will be a happy man. There is a juvenility about your eyes, and

an efflorescence of amaranthine odoriferousness about your cheeks and breath, that are enough to communicate the centrifugal motion to any brain adorned with the slightest modicum of sentiment."

"He who marries me will be a happy man!" she exclaimed, repeating his expressions, probably because they were the only words she understood. "I hope so, Misther O'Shaughnessy. But, sure enough, who'd expect to hear sich soft talk from the makins of a priest! Very well, sir! Upon my word I'll be tellin' Father Finnerty that you do be spakin' up to the girls!—Now!!"

"No, no, Miss Norah; you wouldn't do that merely for my sayin' that you're the handsomest girl in the parish. Father Finnerty himself might say as much, for it would be nothing but veracity—nothing but truth, Miss Norah."

"Ay, but he wouldn't be pattin' me on the cheek! Be asy, Mr. O'Shaughnessy, there's Darby Brady lookin' at you, an' he'll be tellin'!"

"Where?" said Denis, starting.

The girl replied only by an arch laugh.

"Upon my classicality, Miss Norah, you're a rogue; there's nobody lookin', you seraphim!"

"Then there's a pair of us rogues, Misther Dinis."

"No, no, Miss Norah; I was only feeling your cheek as a philosophical experiment. Philosophers often do it, in order to make out an hypothesis. They call it in Scotland *feelosophy*."

"Misther Dinis, if I'm not married till you're a priest, won't you say the words for me for nothing?"

"So long as you ask it wid such a brilliant smile, Miss Norah, do you think that any educated young man, who has read about beauty an' sentimentality in books, could refuse you? But you know, Miss Norah, that the clergyman who marries a couple has always the right of kissin' the bride. Now, I wouldn't claim my right *then*; but it might be possible by a present compromise to—to—— What would you think, for instance, to give me that *now*?"

"To give you what?"

"Why the—— indeed, it's but a slight recompense, the—k—the salutation—the kiss. You know what tasting the head means?"

"Faix, Misther Dinis, you're a great rogue. Who'd think it, indeed? Sure enough, they say smooth water runs deep! Why one ud suppose butther wouldn't melt in your mouth to look at you; an' yet you want to be toyin' wid the girls! Indeed an' faix, it's a great shame for the likes o' you, that's bint on Maynooth, to be thinkin' of coortin' at all. But wait! Upon my word, I'll have a fine story agin you, plase goodness!"

This latter threat the mischievous girl threw out with a grave face, in order to bring Denis into a more ridiculous dilemma; for she saw clearly that he laboured under a heavy struggle between timidity and gallantry. The *ruse* succeeded. Denis immediately changed his tone, and composed his face into a grave admonitory aspect, nearly equal to a homily on prudence and good conduct.

"Miss Norah," said he, "perhaps I acted wrong in carrying my

trial of your disposition too far. It's a thing, however, which we who are intended for the Church are ordered to do, that we may be able to make out what are called, in this very book you see wid me, *cases of conscience.* But the task is now over, Miss Norah; and in requital for your extreme good-nature, I am bound to administer to you a slight lecture on decorum.

"In the first place, attend your duties regularly. I will soon be goin' to Maynooth; an' as you are one of the girls for whom I have the greatest regard, I will expect on my return to hear a good account of you. It is possible that you will be introduced in my absence to the honours of matrimony; but even so, I know that peace, an' taciturnity, an' submission will be your most signal qualifications. You will then be in a situation equal to that of a Roman matron. As for us, Miss Norah, we are subject to the dilapidations of occasional elevation. The ambrosia of sentiment lies in our path. We care not for the terrestrialities of life, when separated from the great principle of the poet—

'Omnia vin cit amor, et nos cedamus amori.'

That's Hebrew, Miss Norah!"

"They say you know a power of larnin', Misther Dinis."

"Yes, I know the seven languages; but what is all that compared to the cardinal virtues? This world is a mere bird of passage, Miss Norah; and it behoves us to be ever on the wing for futurity and premeditation. Now, will you remember the excellent moral advice I have given you?"

"Indeed, I will, sir," replied the roguish minx, tripping away, "particularly that you promised to marry me for nothin' if I'd give you a kiss!"

"Give up everything like levity, Miss Norah. Attend your du——"

"You're a fool, Misther O'Shaughnessy! Why didn't you take the kiss an' spare the king's English?"

On making this observation she redoubled her pace, and left Denis now perfectly sensible that he was a proper subject for her mirth. He turned about, and called after her:

"Had I known you were only in jocosity, Miss Norah, upon my classicality I'd have given you the k——"

He now perceived that she was beyond hearing, and that it was unnecessary to finish the sentence.

These accidental meetings between Denis and the pretty daughters of the neighbouring farmers were, somehow very frequent. Our hero, however, was always extremely judicious in tempering his gallantry and moral advice to his young female acquaintances. In the beginning of the conversation he was sly and complimentary, afterwards he became more insinuating, then more direct in his praises of their beauty; but as his timidity on the point of character was known, the mischief-loving girls uniformly ended with a threat of exposing him to the priest, to his friends, or to the neighbours, as the whim directed them. This brought him back to his morality again; he immediately

commenced an exhortation touching their religious duties, thus hoping to cover, by a trait more becoming his future destination, the little harmless *badinage* in which he had indulged.

The girls themselves frequently made him the topic of conversation —a proof that he was not altogether indifferent to them. In these little conclaves he came very well off. Among them all it was admitted "that there was a rogue in his coat," but this was by no means uttered in a tone of voice that betrayed any disrelish to him. On the contrary, they often said—and many of them with an involuntary sigh—that "he was too purty to be made a priest of;" others, that "it was a pity to make a priest of so fine a young man;" others, again, that "if he must be a priest, the colleens would be all flockin' to hear his sarmons." There was one, however, among them who never mentioned him either in praise or censure; but the rapid changes of her expressive countenance gave strong indications to an observing eye that his name, person, and future prospects were capable of exciting a deep and intense interest in her heart.

At length he began to appear on horseback; and as he had hitherto been in the habit of taking that exercise bare-backed, so he was resolved to get into a saddle, and ride like a gentleman. Henceforth he might be seen mounted upon one of his father's horses, quite erect, and with but one spur, which was, in fact, the only spur, except the whisky bottle, that had been in the family for three generations. This was used, he declared, for no other purpose in life than that of stimulating the animal to the true clerical trot.

From the moment he became a mounted man he assumed an air of less equivocal command in the family; and not only to his own relations was this authority manifested, but to his more distant acquaintances, and, in short, to the whole parish. The people now began to touch their hats to him, which act of respect he returned as much in imitation of the parish priest as possible. They also began to ask him what o'clock it was, and Denis, with a peculiar condescension, balanced still with becoming dignity, stopped, pulled out his watch, and told the hour, after which he held it for a few seconds to his ear with an experienced air, then put it in a dignified manner in his fob, touched the horse with the solitary spur, put himself more erect, and proceeded with—as he himself used to say when condemning the pride of the curate—"all the lordliness of the parochial priest."

The notions which the peasantry entertain of a priest's learning are as extravagant as they are amusing, and such, indeed, as would be too much for the pedantic vanity inseparable from a half-educated man to disclaim. The people are sufficiently reasonable, however, to admit gradations in the extent of knowledge acquired by their pastors; but some of the figures and illustrations which they use in estimating their comparative merits are highly ludicrous. I remember a young man who, at the age of twenty-two, set about preparing himself for the Church. He lived in the bosom of a mountain, whose rugged breast he cultivated with a strength proportioned to the difficulty of subduing it. He was a powerful young fellow, quiet and inoffensive in

his manners, and possessed of great natural talents. It was upon a Monday morning, in the month of June, that the schoolroom-door opened a foot and a half wider than usual, and a huge, colossal figure stalked in, with a kind of bashful laugh upon his countenance, as if conscious of the disproportion betwixt his immense size and that of the other schoolboys. His figure, without a syllable of exaggeration, was precisely such as I am about to describe. His height six feet, his shoulders of an enormous breadth, his head red as fire; his body-coat made after the manner of his grandfather's—the skirts of it being near his heels, and the buttons behind little less than eighteen inches asunder. The pockets were cut so low that, when he stretched his arm to its full length, his fingers could not get further than the flaps; the breast of it was about nine inches longer than was necessary, so that, when he buttoned it, he appeared all body. He wore no cravat, nor was his shirt-collar either pinned or buttoned, but lay open, as if to disclose an immense neck and chest scorched by the sun into a rich and healthy scarlet. His chin was covered with a *sole* of red, dry bristles, that appeared to have been clipped about a fortnight before; and as he wore neither shoe nor stocking, he exhibited a pair of legs to which Rob Roy's were drumsticks. They gave proof of powerful strength, and the thick *fell* of bristly hair with which they were covered argued an amazing hardihood of constitution and tremendous physical energy.

"Sure, masther, I'm comin' to school to you!" were the first words he uttered.

Now there ran beneath the master's solemnity of manner a broad but shallow under-current of humour which agreed but poorly with his pompous display of learning. On this occasion his struggle to retain the grave and overcome the ludicrous was unavailing. The startling fact, thus uncouthly announced by so grotesque a candidate for classical knowledge, occasioned him to receive the intelligence with more mirth than was consistent with good breeding. His pupils, too, who were hitherto afraid to laugh aloud, on observing his countenance dilate into an expression of laughter which he could not conceal, made the roof of the house ring with their mirth.

"Silence, gintlemen!" said he, "*legite*, *perlegite*, *relegite*—study, gintlemen, study—pluck the tree of knowledge, I say, while the fruit is in season. Denny Shaughnessy, what are you facetious for? *Quid rides*, *Dionysi?* And so, Pether—is Pether your pronomen—*quo nomine gowdes?* Silence, boys!—perhaps he was at Latin before and we'll try him—*quo nomine gowdes*, *Pethre?*"

A stare of awkward perplexity was the only reply he could get from the colossus he addressed.

"And so you're fished up from the Streights at last, Pether?"

"Sir, my name's not Pether. My father's name is Paddy Doorish but my own is Franky. I was born in Lisnagh; but we lived double as long as I can mind in the Mountain Bar."

"And, Franky, what put Latin into your head?"

"There was no Latin put into my head; I'm comin' to you for that.'

"And, you graceful sprig of juvenility, have you the conscience to think that I'd undhertake to fill what you carry on your showlders on the same terms that I'd take for replenishing the head of a rasonable youth? Would you be so unjust in all the principles of correct erudition as to expect that, my worthy man-mountain?"

"I don't expect it," said Frank; "all that's in your head wouldn't fill a corner of mine, if you go accordin' to size; but I'll *pay* you for tachin' me as much as you know yourself, an' the more I larn the less pains you'll have wid me."

Franky, however, made an amazing progress—so very rapid, indeed, that in about three years after that day he found himself in Maynooth, and in three years more was an active curate, to whom that very teacher appeared as slavishly submissive as if he had never ridiculed his vulgarity or ungainly dimensions. Poor Frank, however, in consequence of the rapid progress he made, and of the very short interval which elapsed from the period of his commencing Latin until that of his ordination, was assigned by the people the lowest grade in learning. The term used to designate the rank which they supposed him to hold was both humorous and expressive.

"Franky," they would say, "is no *finished* priest in the larnin'; *he's but a scowdher.*"

Now a *scowdher* is an oaten cake laid upon a pair of tongs placed over the *greeshaugh*, or embers, that are spread out for the purpose of baking it. In a few minutes the side first laid down is scorched: it is then turned, and the other side is also scorched: so that it has the appearance of being baked, though it is actually quite raw within. It is a homely but an exceedingly apt illustration, when applied to such men as Frank.

"Poor Frank," they would observe, "is but a *scowdher;* the sign of the tongs—No. 11—is upon him; so that it is asy known he never was laid to the *muddha arran*,"[1]—that is to say, properly baked—or duly and thoroughly educated.

Denis, however, to resume more directly the thread of our narrative, on finding himself mounted, took an inveterate prejudice against walking. There was something, he thought, far more dignified in riding than in pacing slowly upon the earth, like a common man, who had not the justification of Latin and Greek for becoming an equestrian. Besides this accomplishment, there were also many other habits to be broken off, and more genteel ones to be adopted in their place. These were all suggested by his rising pride; and, in sooth, they smacked strongly of that adroitness with which the Irish priest, and every priest, contrives to accomplish the purpose of feeding well through the ostensible medium of a different motive.

He accordingly took his father aside one morning, after he had

[1] The *muddha arran* is literally "the bread stick," a term in opposition to the *scowdher*. It is a forked stick with three legs, that stands opposite the fire, and supports the cake, which is placed on the edge until it is gradually baked. The *scowdher* is, for the most part, made in cases of hurry.

eaten a more meagre breakfast than usual, and, after licking his lips, addressed him in these words :—

"I think, father, that upon considerating the consequence to which I am now entitled, and the degree of respectability which, in my own person—*in propriâ personâ*—I communicate to the vulgarians with whom I am connected—I call them vulgarians from no derogatory motive ; but you will concede yourself that they are ignorant of the larned languages, an' consequently, though dacent enough, still, in reference to Latin an' Greek, but vulgarians. Well ! *Quid multis ?*—I say, that taking all these things into speculation, looking at them—*veluti in speculum*—it is neither dacent nor becoming that I should ate in the manner I have done, as vulgarly as themselves—that I should ate, I say, any longer without knife and fork. Neither, I announce, shall I in future drink my milk any longer, as I have, with all humility, done hitherto, out of a noggin ; nor continue to disrobe my potatoes any longer without a becoming instrument. I must also have better viands to consume. You are not to be informed that I am in that situation of life in which, from my education and other accomplishments, I must be estimated as duly qualified to ate beef and mutton instead of bacon, an' to have my *tay* breakfast instead of stirabout, which, in polite society, is designated *porridge*. You know yourself, and must acknowledge, that I'm soon likely to confer distinction and pre-eminence upon the poor illiterate, but honest creatures, with whom I am associated in the bonds of blood-relationship. If I were a dunce, or a booby, or a leather-head, the case might be different ; but you yourself are well acquainted with my talents at logic and conthroversy ; an' I have sound rasons and good authority, which I could quote, if necessary, for proving that nothing increases the weight of the brain, and accelerates to gravity and solidity, more than good feeding. Pay attention, therefore, to my words, for I expect that they will be duly observed:—buy me a knife and fork ; and when I get them, it's not to lay them past to rust, you consave. The beef and mutton must follow ; and in future I'm resolved to have my *tay* breakfast. There are geese and turkeys and pullets enough about the yard, and I am bent on accomplishing myself in the art of carving them. I'm not the man now to be placed among the other riff-raff of the family over a basket of potatoes, wid a black clerical coat upon me, and a noggin of milk under my arm ! I tell you the system must be changed : the schoolmaster is abroad, and I'll tolerate such vulgarity no longer. Now saddle the horse till I ride across the bog to Pether Rafferty's station, where I'm to sarve mass : plase heaven, I'll soon be able to say one myself, and give you all a lift in spirituals—ehem !"

"Throth, Dinny, I b'lieve you're right, avick : and ——"

"*Vick* me no longer, father—that's another thing I forgot. It's full time that I should be *sirred* ; and if my own relations won't call me *sir* instead of Dinny, it's hardly to be expected that strangers will do it. I wish to goodness you had never stigmatized me wid so vulgar an epithet as Dinny. The proper word is Dionysius ; and, in future, I'll expect to be called Misther Dionysius."

"Sure I or your mother needn't be *sirrin'* you, Dinny?"

"I haven't made up my mind as to whether I'll demand that proof of my respectability from you and my mother, or not; but on this I'm immovable, that instead of Dinny, you must, as I said, designate me Dionysius."

"Well, well, avourneen, I suppose only it's right you wouldn't be axin' us; but I'm sure your poor mother will never be able to get her tongue about Dionnisis, it's so long and larned a word."

"It is a larned word, no doubt; but she must persevere until she's able to masther it. I wouldn't for three tenpennies that the priest would hear one of you call me Dinny: it would degradate me very much in his estimation. At all events, if my mother cannot manage the orthography of Dionysius, let it be Denis, or anything but that signature of vulgarity, Dinny. Now, father, you won't neglect to revale what I've ordered to the family."

"No, indeed, I will not, avick—I mane Dionnisis, avourneen—I'll tell them everything as you ordhered, but as to Dionnisis, I'm cock sure that poor Mave will never be able to get her ould tongue about so new-fangled a piece of larnin' as that is. Well, well, this knowledge bates the world!"

When the horse was saddled, and Dionysius on his way with all due pomp to the station, old Denis broke the matter to his wife.

"Mave, achora," said he, "I have sthrange news to tell you: sure Dionnisis is goin' to make himself a gintleman."

"Sure what?"

"Dionnisis, our son Dionnisis, is goin' to make himself a gintleman; he'll ate no longer widout a knife and fork."

"Saints about us," exclaimed Mave, rising, and looking with alarm into her husband's face—"saints about us, Denis, what is't ails you? Sure there would be nothin' wrong wid you about the head, Denis? or maybe it's a touch of a faver you've got, out riddling that corn bare-headed, yistherday? I remimber the time my aunt Bridget tuck the scarlet faver she begun to rave and spake foolish in the same way."

"Why, woman, if your aunt Bridget had a faver made up of all the colours in the rainbow, I tell you I'm spakin' sinse! Our son Dionnisis proved himself a gintleman out in the garden wid me about an hour ago."

"I suppose so, Denis," she replied, humouring him, for she was still doubly convinced that he laboured under some incipient malady, if not under actual insanity; "an' what son is *this*, Dinny? I've never heard of *him* before."

"Our son Denis, woman alive. You must know he's not to be called Dinny or Dinis any more, but Dionnisis; he's to begin atin' wid a knife an' fork to-morrow; we must get him beef and mutton, an' a tay breakfast. He says it's not fair play in anyone that's so deep read in the larnin' as he is to ate like a vulgarian, or to peel his phaties wid his fingers, an' him knows so much Latin an Greek; an' my sowl to happiness, but he'll stick to the gintlemanly way of livin' so far as the beef an' mutton an' tay is consarned."

"He will! An', Dinis Shaughnessy, who has a betther right to turn gintleman nor the gorsoon that studied for that? Isn't it proud you ought to be that he has the spirit to think of sich things?"

"I'll engage, Mave, on that point you'll find him spirited enough · for my part, I don't begrudge him what he wants, but I heard the people say that no man's a gintleman who's not *College-bred*, and you know he's not that yet."

"You forget that he has gentle blood in his veins, Denis. There was a day when my family, the Magennises, held their heads up; and Kolumkill says that the same time is to come back agin to all the ould families. Who knows if it's altogether from *himself* he's takin' to the beef an' mutton, but from *prophecy;* he knows what he's about, I'll warrant him. For our part, it's not right for us to cross him in it; it's for the good of the Church, no doubt, an' we might lose more by a *blast* upon the corn or the cattle than he'd ate the other way. That's my dhrame out that I had last night about him. I thought we were all *gother* somewhere that I can't rightly remimber; but anyhow, there was a great *sight* of people in it, an' high doins goin' an in the atin' way. I looked about me, an' seen ever so many priests dressed all like the Protestant clargy; our Dinis was at the head of them, wid a three-cocked hat an' a wig upon him; he was cuttin' up beef an' mutton at the rate of a weddin', an' dhrinkin' wine in metherfuls.

"'Musha, Dinis,' says myself, 'what's all this for?'

"'Why,' says he, 'it's all for the good of the Church an' the faithful. I'm now Archbishop of the county,' says he, 'the Protestants are all banished, an' we are in their place.'

"The sorra one o' myself all this time but thought he was a priest still; so says I, 'Dinny, you're a wantin' to anoint Paddy Diarmud, who's given over, an' if you don't make haste you won't *overtake* him?'

"'He must wait then till mornin',' says Dinny, 'or if he chooses to die against my will, an' the will o' the Church, let him take the quense-quences. We're wealthy now.'

"I was so much frightened at the kind of voice that he spoke to me in that I awoke; an' sure enough, the first thing I heard was the fizzin' o' bacon in the pan. I wondered who could be up so early, an' puttin' my head through the door, there was Dinny busy at it, wid an ould knife in one hand, an' an iron skiver in the other, imitatin' a fork.

"'What are you doin' so early, Dinny?' says I.

"'I'm practisin',' says he.

"'What for?' says I.

"'Oh, I'm practisin',' says he, back again, 'go to bed; I'm practisin' for the Church, an' the station that's to be in Pether Rafferty's to-day.'

"Now, Dinny, between you an' me, that dhrame didn't come for nothin'. So give the gorsoon his way, an' if he chooses to be a gintleman, why, let him; he'll be the more honour to thim that reared him."

"Thrue for you, indeed, Mave; he always had a high spirit ever since he was intinded for the *robes*, and would have his own way and

will in whatever he took into his head, right or wrong, as cleverly as if he had the authority for it."

"An' so he ought, seein' he wasn't to be slavin' at the spade like the rest o' the family. The ways o' them that have great larnin' as he has isn't like other people's ways—they must be humoured, and have their own will, otherwise what ud they be betther than their neighbours?"

The other arrangements laid down by Denis, touching his determination not to be addressed so familiarly by his brothers and sisters, were next discussed in this conversation, and of course the same prejudice in his favour was manifested by his indulgent parents. The whole code of his injunctions was subsequently disclosed to the family in all its extent and rigour. Some of them heard it with surprise, and others with that kind of dogged indignation evinced by those who are in some degree prepared for the nature of the communication about to be laid before them. Altogether the circumstances in which it placed them were peculiar and embarrassing. The Irish peasant can seldom bear to have the tenderness of domestic affection tampered with, whether from pride, caprice, or any other motive not related to his prejudices. In this instance the strongest feelings of the O'Shaughnessys were brunted, as it were, in hostile array against each other; and although the moral force on each side was nearly equal, still the painful revulsion produced by Denis's pride, as undervaluing their affection, and substituting the cold forms of artificial life for the warmth of honest hearts like theirs, was, in the first burst of natural fervour, strongly and somewhat indignantly expressed.

Denis had been their pride, the privileged person among them—the individual whose talents were to throw lustre upon a nameless and unknown family; the future priest—the embryo preacher of eminence—the resistless controversialist—the holy father confessor—and perhaps, for with that vivacity of imagination peculiar to the Irish, they could scarcely limit his exaltation—perhaps the bishop of a whole diocese. Had not the Lord Primate himself been the son of as humble a man? "And who knows," said his youngest and fairest sister, who of all the family was most devoted to him, "but Dinny might yet be a primate?" And as she spoke, the tear of affection, pride, and enthusiasm glistened in her eye. Denis, therefore, had been much, even in his youth, to their simple hearts, and far more to their hopes and expectations than he was in all the pride of his petty polemics; but when he, before whose merits, both real and imaginary, every heart among them bowed as before the shrine of a tutelar saint, turned round, ere the destined eminence he aimed at was half attained, and laid upon their fervent affection the icy chain of pride and worldly etiquette, the act was felt keenly and unexpectedly as the acute spasm of some sudden malady.

The father and mother, however, both defended him with great warmth; and by placing his motives in that point of view which agreed best with their children's prejudices, they eventually succeeded in reconciling his brothers and sisters in some degree to the necessity of adopting the phraseology he proposed, that they might treat him with suitable respect in the eye of the world.

"It's proud of him we ought to be," said his father, "and delighted that he has sich a risin' spirit; an' sure, the more respect is paid to him, the greater credit he will be to ourselves."

"But sure, he has no right," said his eldest brother, "to be settin' up for a gintleman till he's priested. I'm willin' enough to *sir* him, only that it cuts me more than I'll say to think that I must be callin' the boy that I'd spill the last dhrop of my blood for, afther the manner of a sthranger; and besides," he added, "I'm not clear but the neighbours will be passin' remarks upon us, as they did when you and he used to be arguin'."

"I'd like to see them that ud turn it into a joke," said his father; "I would let them know that Dinis O'Shaughnessy's dog is neither to be made or meddled wid in a disrespectful manner, let alone his son. We are not widout friends and connections that ud take our quarrel upon them in his defince, if there was a needcessity for it; but there will not, for didn't my heart lep the other day to my throat wid delight when I saw Larry Neil put his hand to his hat to him, comin' up the Esker upon the mare; an' may I never do an ill turn, if he didn't answer the bow to Larry as if he was the priest of the parish already. It's the wondher of the world how he picks up a jinteel thing anyhow, an' ever did, since he was the hoith o' that."

"Why," said the mother, "what a norration yees rise about thratin' the boy as everyone like him ought to be thrated. Wait till ye see him a parish priest, and then ye'll be comin' round him to get your daughters to keep house for him, and your sons edicated and made priests of; but now that the child takes a ginteel relish for beef and mutton, and wants to be respected, yees are mane an' low spirited enough to grumble about it."

"No, mother," said his youngest sister, bursting into tears, "I'd beg it for him, sooner nor he should want; but I can't bear to be callin' my brother Dinny *sir*—like a stranger. It looks as if *I* didn't love him, or as if *he* was forgettin' us, or carin' less about us nor he used to do."

This, in fact, was the root and ground of the opposition which Denis's plan received at the hands of his relations; it repressed the cordial and affectionate intercourse which had hitherto subsisted between them; but the pride of life, and, what is more, the pride of an office which ought always to be associated with humility, had got into his heart; the vanity of learning, too, thin and shallow though it was, inflated him; and the effect of both was a gradual induration of feeling—an habitual sense of his own importance, and a notion of supreme contempt for all who were more ignorant than himself.

After the first impression of pain and mortification had passed away from the minds of his brothers and sisters, it was, however, unanimously admitted that he was right, and ere long no other feeling than one of good humour mingled with drollery could be perceived among them. They were clearly convinced that he claimed no more from strangers than was due to him; but they certainly were not prepared to hear that he had brought the exaction of personal respect so com-

pletely and unexpectedly home to themselves as he had done. The thing, too, along with being unreasonable, was awkward and embarrassing in the extreme; for there is a kind of feeling among brothers and sisters, which, though it cannot be described, is very trying to their delicacy and shamefacedness under circumstances of a similar nature. In humble life you will see a married woman who cannot call her husband after his Christian name; or a husband who, from some extraordinary restraint, cannot address his wife except in that distant manner which the principle I allude to dictates, and habit confirms.

Denis, however, had overcome this modesty, and felt not a whit too shamefaced to arrogate to his own learning and character the most unhesitating manifestation of their deference and respect, and they soon scrupled not to pay it.

The night of that evening was pretty far advanced, when a neighbour's son, named Condy Callaghan, came to inform the family that Denis, when crossing the bog on his way home, had ridden into a swamp, from which he found much difficulty in extricating himself, but added, "The mare is sunk to the saddle-skirts, and cannot get out widout men and ropes." In a short time a sufficient number of the neighbours were summoned together, and proceeded to the animal's relief. Denny's importance, as well as his black dress, was miserably tarnished; he stood, however, with as dignified an air as possible, and in a bombastic style proceeded to direct the men as to the best manner of relieving her.

"Asy, Dinny," said his brother, with a good-humoured but significant smile—"larning may be very good in its place; in the manetime, lave the business in our hands rather than in your head—or if you have e'er a scrap of Greek or Latin that ud charm ould Sobersides out, where was the use of sendin' for help?"

"I say," replied Denis, highly offended, "I'll not tolerate vulgarity any longer; you must *larn* to address me in a more polite style. If the animal—that purblind quadruped—walked into the mire, by what logic can you produce an association between her blindness and my knowledge of Latin and Greek? But why do I degradate my own consequence by declaiming to you a eulogium upon logic. It's only throwing pearls before swine."

"I didn't mane to offind you," replied the warm-hearted brother; "I meant you no offince in what I said, so don't take it ill—we'll have Sobersides out in no time—and barrin an' extra rubbin' down to both of you, neither will be the worse, I hope."

"As to what you hope or despair, Brian, it could produce no other impression on the subtilty of my fancy than pity for the man who could compare me—considering the brilliancy of my career, and the extent of my future speculations—to a quadruped like Sobersides, by asserting that I, as well as she, ought to be *rubbed down!* And were it not that I confront the offince with your own ignorance, I would expose you before the townland in which we stand; ay, to the whole parish—but I spare you, out of respect to my own consequence."

"I ax your pardon," said the brother; "I won't offind you in the

same way again. What I said, I said to you as I thought a brother might—I ax your pardon!"

There was a slight agitation approaching to a tremor in his brother's voice that betokened sorrow for his own impropriety in too familiarly addressing Denis, and perhaps regret that so slight and inoffensive a jest should have been so harshly received in the presence of strangers by a brother who had in reality been his idol. He reflected upon the conversation held on that morning in the family, touching Denny's prerogative in claiming a new and more deferential deportment from them all; and he could not help feeling that there was in it a violation of some natural principle long sacred to his heart. But the all-pervading and indefinite awe felt for that sacerdotal character into which his brother was about to enter subdued all, and reconciled him to those inroads upon violated nature, despite her own voice, loudly expressed as it was in his bosom.

When the family was once more assembled that night, Denis addressed them in a tone which implied that the *odium theologicum* had not prevented the contrition expressed by his brother from altogether effacing from his mind the traces of his offence.

"Unworthy of respect," he proceeded, "as it appears by some of my relations I am held," and he glanced at his brother, "yet I beg permission to state that our worthy parochial priest, or, I should rather say, the Catholic rector of this parish, is of a somewhat different habit of thought or contemplation. I dined with him to-day—ehem—dined with him upon an excellent joint of mutton—I say, father, the *mutton* was good—and with his proud, pertinacious curate, whom I do not at all relish; whether, as Homer says—I enumerate his scurrilous satire, or his derogatory insinuations. His parochial pastor and spiritual superior is a gentleman, or as Horace says, *homo factus ad unguem*—which is, paraphrastically, every inch a gentleman—or more literally—a gentleman to the tops of his fingers—ehem—hem—down to the very nails—as it were.

"Well—having dicusssed that—*observatis observandis, quoad sacerdotem*—having passed my eulogium upon Father Finnerty—upon my word and credit, though, punch is *primâ facie* drink—and, father, that brings me to remember an omission which I committed in my dialogue with you this morning. I forgot to say that after my dinner, in the manner I expounded to you, it will be necessary to have a tumbler of punch—for, as Father Finnerty says, there is nothing which so effectually promotes the organs of digestion. Now, my introduction of *this*, in the middle of my narrative, is what the hypercritics call a *parenthesis*, which certainly betrays no superficial portion of literary perusal on my part, if you could at all but understand it as well as Father Finnerty, our worthy parochial incumbent, does. As for the curate, should I ever come to authority in the Irish hierarchy, I shall be strongly disposed to discountenance him, if it were only for his general superciliousness of conduct. So there's another clause disposed of.

"Well—to proceed—I say I have intelligence regarding myself that will be by no means unsavoury to you all. Father Finnerty and I

had, about an hour before dinner this day, a long and tedious conversation, the substance of which was my future celebrity in the Church. He has a claim on the bishop, which he stated to me will be exercised in my favour, although there are several candidates for it in this parish, not one of whom, however, is within forty-five degrees of being so well qualified for college as myself. Father, is there not a jar—an *amphora*—as that celebrated satirist, Juvenal, has it—an *amphora*—in the chimly-brace, filled with liquor—get it, and let us inter animosity—I'll not be long a member of the domestic circle with you—so, upon the basis of the communication I have to make, let us, as I said, become sextons to animosity and care. 'Dionysius,' said Father Finnerty, addressing me, which shows, at all events, that I am not so unimportant as some of my friends would suppose—'*Dionysius*,' said he, '*inter nos*— between you and me—I believe I have it in my power to send up a candidate to Maynooth. 'Tis true I never make a promise—*nunquam facio votum*—except in certain cases, or in other words, Dionysius, *exceptis excipiendis*—in which is the *essence*, as it were, of a proper vow.' In the meantime he proceeded—'With regard to your prospects in the Church, I can only say, in the first place, and I say it with much truth and sincerity—*that I'm badly off for a horse;* that, however, is, as I said, *inter nos—sub sigillo.* The old *garran* I have is fairly worn out—and, not that I say it, your father has as pretty a colt as there is within the bounds—*intra terminos parochii mei*, within the two ends of my parish: *verbum sat*—which is, I'm sure you are a sensible and discreet young man. Your father, Dionysius, is a parishioner whom I regard and esteem to the highest degree of comparison, and you will be pleased to report my eulogium to himself and to his dacent family—and proud may they be of having so brilliant a youth among them as you are—ehem!'

"Now, you may all think that this was plain conversation; but I had read too much for that. In fact, it was *logic*—complate, convincing logic, every word of it. So I responded to him in what is called in the books, the *argumentum ad crumenam;* although I question but it ought to be designated here the *argumentum ad bestiam.* Said I, 'Father Finnerty, the colt, my paternal property, which you are pleased to eulogise so highly, is a good one; it was designed for myself when I should come out on the mission; however, I will undertake to say, if you get me into Maynooth, that my father on my authority will *lend* you the colt to-morrow, and the day of his claiming it will be dependent upon the fulfilment of your promise, or *votum*.'

"'*Signatum et sigillatum est*,' said he, for, indeed, the best part of the discussion was conducted in Latin; 'and now,' he continued, 'my excellent Dionysius, nothing remains but that the colt be presented ——'

"'Lent,' I responded, correcting him, you see, even although he was the priest—'*lent*,' said I, 'and your reverence will be good enough to give the *votum* before one or two of my friends.'

"He looked at me sharply, not expecting to find such deep logic in one he conjectured to be but a *tyro*.

"'You will be a useful man in the Church,' he added, 'and you deserve to be pushed on, at all events. In the meantime, tell your father that I'll ride up and breakfast with him to-morrow, and he can have a friend or two to talk over the *compactum*.'

"So, father, there's the state of the question at present, the accomplishment of the condition is dependent upon yourself."

My readers may perceive that Denis, although a pedant, was not a fool. It has been said that no man is a hero to his *valet-de-chambre;* but I think the truth of the sentiment contained in that saying is questionable. Denis, on the contrary, was nowhere so great a man as in his own chimney-corner, surrounded by his family. It was there he was learned, accomplished, profound; next to that, he was great among those who, although not prejudiced in his favour by the bonds of affection, were too ignorant to discover those literary pranks which he played off because he knew he could do so without detection. The basis, however, of his character was shrewd humour and good sense; and, even at the stage of life which we have just described, it might have been evident to a close observer that, when a proper knowledge of his powers, joined to a further acquaintance with the world, would enable him to cast off the boyish assumption of pedantry, a man of a keen, ready intellect and considerable penetration would remain.

Many of my readers may be inclined to exclaim that the character of Denny is not to be found in real life; but they are mistaken who think so. They are not to suppose that Denis O'Shaughnessy was the same person in his intercourse with intelligent men and scholars that he appeared among the illiterate peasantry or his own relations. Far from it. With the former, persons like him are awkward and bashful, or modest and unassuming, according to the bent of their natural disposition. With scholars, Denis made few pretensions to superior knowledge; but, on the contrary, took refuge, if he dreaded a scrutiny into his acquirements, in the humblest acknowledgment of his limited reading, and total unacquaintance with those very topics on which he was, under other circumstances, in the habit of expatiating so fluently. In fact, were I to detail some of the scenes of his exhibitions as they were actually displayed, *then* I have no doubt I might be charged with colouring too highly.

When Denis had finished the oration from the chimney-corner, delivered with suitable gesticulation while he stood drying himself at the fire after the catastrophe of the swamp, a silence of some minutes followed. The promise of the colt made to the priest with such an air of authority was a *finale* which the father did not expect, and by which he was not a little staggered.

"I could like it all very well," replied the father, "save an' except givin' away the coult, that's worth five-an'-twenty guineas, if he's worth a *crona-bawn*. To tell the blessed thruth, Dinis, if you had settled the business widout *that*, I'd be betther plased."

"Just exercise your contemplation upon it for a short period," replied Denis, "and you will perceive that I stipulated to *lend* him before witnesses; and if Father Finnerty does not matriculate me

into Maynooth, then do you walk down some brilliant morning or other and take your baste by the head, direct yourself home, hold the bridle as you proceed, and by the time you're at the rack you'll find the horse at the manger. I have now stated the legality of the matter, and you may act as your own subtlety of perception shall dictate. I have laid down the law, do you consider the equity."

"Why," said the father, "if I thought he would get you into ——"

"Correct, quite correct: the cardinal point there is the *if*. If he does, give him the horse; but if not, reclaim the quadruped without hesitation. I am not to be kept back, if profundity and erudition can substantiate a prospect. Still, father, the easiest way is the safest, and the shortest the most expeditious."

The embarrassing situation in which the other members of the family were placed imposed upon them a profound silence in reference to the subject of conversation. Yet, while Denny delivered the aforesaid harangue from the chimney-corner, every eye was fixed upon him with an expression of pride and admiration which escaped not his own notice. Their deportment towards him was affectionate and respectful; but none of them could so far or so easily violate old habits as to address him according to his own wishes; they therefore avoided addressing him at all.

The next morning Father Finnerty paid them his purposed visit, and, as he had promised, arrived in time for breakfast. A few of Denis's relations *were* assembled, and in their presence the arrangements respecting the colt and Denny's clerical prospects were privately concluded. So far everything was right; the time of Denny's departure for Maynooth was to be determined by the answer which Father Finnerty should receive from the bishop; for an examination must, of course, take place, which was to be conducted by the prelate, or by some other clergyman appointed for that purpose. This and the necessary preparation usual on such occasions were the only impediments in the way of his departure for Maynooth, a place associated with so many dreams of that lowly ambition which the humble circumstances of the peasantry permit them to entertain.

The Irish people, I need scarcely observe, are a poor people; they are also, very probably for the same reason, an imaginative people; at all events, they are excited by occurrences which would not produce the same vivacity of emotion which they experience upon any other people in the world. This, after all, is but natural; a long endurance of hunger will render the coarsest food delicious; and, on the contrary, when the appetite is glutted with the richest viands, it requires a dish whose flavour is proportionably high and spicy to touch the jaded palate. It is so with our moral enjoyments. In Ireland a very simple accession to their hopes or comforts produces an extraordinary elevation of mind, and so completely unlocks the sluices of their feelings, that every consideration is lost in the elation of the moment. At least it was so in Denis O'Shaughnessy's family upon this occasion.

No sooner had Father Finnerty received the colt, and pledged himself that Denny should have the place in Maynooth that was then

vacant, than a tumultuous expression of delight burst from his family and relations. Business was then thrown aside for the day; the house was scoured and set in order, as if it were for a festival; their best apparel was put on; every eye was bright, every heart throbbed with a delightful impulse, whilst kindness and hilarity beamed from their faces. In a short time they all separated themselves among their neighbours to communicate the agreeable tidings; and the latter, with an honest participation in their happiness, instantly laid aside their avocations, and flocked to Denis O'Shaughnessy's, that they might congratulate him and his friends upon what was considered the completion of their hopes. When the day was more advanced, several of Denny's brothers and sisters returned, and the house was nearly filled with their acquaintances and relations. Ere one o'clock had passed they were all assembled, except old Denis, of whom no person could give any intelligence. Talk, loud laughter, pure poteen, and good humour all circulated freely; the friendly neighbour, unshaved, and with his Sunday coat thrown hastily over his work-day apparel, drank to Denny's health, and wished that he might "bate all Maynewth out of the face; an' sure there's no doubt of that, anyhow—doesn't myself remimber him puttin' the explanations to Pasthorini before he was the bulk o' my fist." His brothers and sisters now adopted with enthusiasm the terms of respect which he had prescribed for them through his father; he was *Sirred* and *Misthered*, and all but *Reverenced*, with a glow of affectionate triumph which they strove not to conceal. He was also overwhelmed with compliments of all hues and complexions; one reminded him of the victory he obtained over a hedge-schoolmaster who came one Sunday a distance of fifteen miles to *sack* him in English Grammar on the chapel-green; but as the man was no classical scholar, "Sure," observed his neighbour, "I remember well that he couldn't get a word out of Misther Denis's head there but Latin; so that the poor crathur, afther travellin' fifteen long miles, had to go home agin', the show o' the world, widout undherstandin' a sintence of the larnin' that was put an him; an' so here's wishin' you health, Misther Dinis, agra, an' no fear in life but you'll be the jewel at the prachin', sir, plase goodness!"

Another reminded him of "how often he proved Phadrick Murray to be an ass, and showed him how he couldn't make out the differ atween black an' white."

"Sure, an' he did," said Phadrick, scratching his head, for he was one of the first at the house; "an' no wondher, wid his long-headed screwtations from the books. Throth, his own father was the best match, barrin' Father Lawdher that was broke of his bread, he ever met wid, till he got too many for him by the Latin an' Greek."

This allusion to old Denis occasioned his absence to be noticed.

"Can nobody tell where Denis More is?" said the wife. "My gracious, but it's quare he should be from about the place this day, anyway. Brian, mavourneen, did you see him goin' anywhere?"

"No," said Brian, "but I see him comin' down there, carryin' some atables in a basket."

Brian had scarcely ended when his father entered, bearing beef and mutton, as aforesaid, both of which he deposited upon the kitchen table, with a jerk of generosity and pride that seemed to say, as he looked significantly at Denny—and, in fact, as he did say afterwards—"Never spare, Dinny; ate like a gintleman; make yourself as bright an' ginteel as you can; you won't want for beef an' mutton!"

Old Denis now sat down, and after wiping the perspiration from his forehead, took the glass of poteen which the wife handed him; he held it between his finger and thumb for a moment, glanced around him upon the happy faces present, then laid it down again, fixed his eyes upon his son, and cast them once more upon the company. The affectionate father's heart was full; his breast heaved, and the large tears rolled slowly down his cheek. By a strong effort, however, he mastered his emotion; and taking the glass again, he said, in a broken voice:

"Neighbours!—God bless yees!—God bless yees!—Dinny—Dinny—I——"

The last words he pronounced with difficulty; and drinking off his glass, set it down empty upon the table. He then rose up, and shook his neighbours by the hand.

"I am," said he, "a happy man, no doubt of it, an' we're all happy; an' it's proud any father might be to hear the account of his son that I did of mine, as I was convoyin' Father Finnerty a piece o' the way home. 'Your son,' says he, when he took that bit of a coult out o' my hand, 'will be an honour to you all. I tell you,' says he, 'that he's nearly as good a scholar as myself, an' spakes Latin not far behind my own, an' as for pracher,' says he, 'I can tell you that he'll be hard *farther* nor any man I know.' He tould me them words wid his own two lips. An' surely, neighbours," said he, relapsing into strong feeling, "you can't blame me for bein' both proud an' happy of sich a son."

My readers, from the knowledge already given them of Denny's character, are probably disposed to think that his learning was thrown out on this occasion in longer words and more copious quotations than usual. This, however, was not the case; so far from that, he never displayed less pedantry, nor interspersed his conversation with fewer scraps of Latin. In fact, the proceedings of the day appeared to affect him with a tone of thought decidedly at variance with the exuberance of joy experienced by the family. He was silent, moody, and evidently drawn by some secret reflection from the scene around him. He held a book in his hand, into which he looked from time to time with the air of a man who balances some contingency in his mind. At length, when the conversation of those who were assembled became more loud and boisterous, he watched an opportunity of gliding out unperceived; having accomplished this, he looked cautiously about him, and finding himself not observed, he turned his steps to a glen which lay about half a mile below his father's house.

At the lowest skirt of this little valley, protected by a few spreading hawthorns, stood a small white farm-house, more immediately shaded by a close row of elder or boor trees, which hung over one of the gables, and covered the garden gate, together with a neat grassy seat,

that was built between the gate and the gable. It was impervious to sun and rain : one of those pretty spots which present themselves on the road-side in the country, and strike the eye with a pleasing notion of comfort ; especially when, during a summer shower, the cocks and hens of the little yard are seen by the traveller who takes shelter under it huddled up in silence, the white dust quite dry, whilst the heavy shower patters upon the leaves above, and upon the dark, drenched road beside them.

Under the shade of this sat an interesting girl, aged about seventeen, named Susan Connor. She was slender, and not above the middle size ; but certainly, in point of form and feature, such as might be called beautiful—handsome she unquestionably was ; but be that as it may, with this rustic beauty the object of Denis's stolen visit was connected. She sat knitting under the shade of elder which we have described, a sweet picture of innocence and candour. Our hero's face, as he approached her, was certainly a fine study for anyone who wished to embody the sad and the ludicrous. Desperate was the conflict between pedantry and feeling which he experienced. His manner appeared more pompous and affected than ever : yet was there blended with the flush of approaching triumph as a candidate such woe-begone shades of distress, flitting occasionally across his features, as rendered his countenance inscrutably enigmatical.

When the usual interchange of preliminary conversation had passed, Denis took his seat beside her on the grassy bench ; and after looking in several directions, and giving half a dozen hems, he thus accosted her :

"Susan, cream of my affections, I may venture to conjecture that the fact, or *factum*, of my being the subject of a *fama clamosa* to-day has not yet reached your ears?"

"Now, Denis, you are at your deep larning from the books again. Can't you keep your reading for the n that undherstands it, an' not be spakin' so Englified to a simple girl like me?"

"There is logic in that same, however. Do you know, Susan, I have often thought that, provided always you had resaved proper instruction, you would have made a first-rate classical scholar."

"So you tould me, Denis, the Sunday evening we exchanged the promise. But sure, when you get me, I can larn it. Won't you tache me, Denis?"

She turned her laughing eyes archly at him as she spoke, with a look of joy and affection : it was a look, indeed, that staggered for the moment every ecclesiastical resolution within him. He returned her glance, and ran over the features of her pure and beautiful countenance for some minutes ; then, placing his open hand upon his eyes, he seemed buried in reflection. At length he addressed her.

"Susan, I am thinking of that same Sunday evening on which we exchanged the hand-promise. I say, Susan,—*dimidium animæ meæ*—I am in the act of meditating upon it : and sorry am I to be compel—to be under the neces—to be reduced, I say—that is, *redactus* in the larned langua—— : in other words—or terms, indeed, is more elegant —in other terms, then, Susan, I fear that what I just now alluded to.

touching the *fama clamosa* which is current about me this day, will render that promise a rather premature one on both our parts. Some bachelors in my situation might be disposed to call it foolish, but I entertain a reverence—a veneration for the feelings of the feminine sex, that inclines me to use the mildest and most classical language in divulging the change that has taken place in my fortunes since I saw you last."

"What do you mane, Denis?" inquired Susan, suddenly ceasing to knit, and fixing her eyes upon him with a glance of alarm.

"To be plain, Susy, I find that Maynooth is my destination. It has been arranged between my father and Docthor Finnerty that I must become a labourer in the vineyard; that is, that I must become a priest, and cultivate the grape. It's a sore revelation to make to an amorous maiden; but destiny will be triumphant:—

"'Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis.'"

The poor girl suddenly laid down the work on which she had been engaged, her face became the colour of ashes, and the reply she was about to make died upon her lips. She again resumed her stocking, but almost instantly laid it down a second time, and appeared wholly unable either to believe or comprehend what he said.

"Denis," she at length asked, "did you say that all is to be over between us?"

"That was my insinuation," replied Denis. "The fact is, Susy, that destiny is adverse; clean against our union in the bonds of matrimonial ecstacy. But, Susy, my charmer, I told you before that you were not destitute of logic, and I hope you will bear this heavy visitation as becomes a philosopher."

"Bear it, Denis! How ought I to bear it, after your saying and swearing, too, that neither father nor mother, nor priest, nor anybody else would make you desart me?"

"But, Susan, my nightingale, perhaps you are not aware that there is an authority in existence to which father, mother, and all must knuckle down. That is the Church, Susan. Reflect—*dulce decus meum*—that the power of the Church is able to loose and unloose, to tie and untie, to forgive and to punish, to raise to the highest heaven, or to sink to the profoundest Tartarus. That power, Susan, thinks proper to claim your unworthy and enamoured swain as one of the brightest Colossuses of her future glory. The Irish hierarchy is plased to look on me as a luminary of almost superhuman brilliancy and corruscation: my talents she pronounces to be of the first magnitude; my eloquence classical and overwhelming, and my learning only adorned by that poor insignificant attribute denominated by philosophers unfathomability!—hem! hem!"

"Denis," replied the innocent girl, "you sometimes spake that I can undherstand you; but you oftener spake in a way that I can hardly make out what you say. If it's a thing that my love for you, or the solemn promise that passed between us, would stand in your light, or prevint you from higher things as a priest, I am willing to—to—to

give you up, whatever I may suffer. But you know yourself that you brought me on from time to time under your promise that nothing would ever lead you to lave me in sorrow an' disappointment. Still, I say, that —— But, Denis, is it thrue that you could lave *me* for *anything?*"

The innocent confidence in his truth expressed by the simplicity of her last question staggered the young candidate; that is to say, her words, her innocence, and her affection sank deeply into his heart.

"Susan," he replied, "to tell the blessed truth, I am fairly dilemma'd. My heart is in your favour; but—but—hem—you don't know the prospect that is open to me. You don't know the sin of keeping back such a—a—a—galaxy as I am from the Church. I say you don't know the *sin* of it. *That's* the difficulty. If it was a common case it would be nothing; but to keep back a person like me—*a rara avis in terris*—from the priesthood, is a sin that requires a great dale of interest with the Pope to have absolved.

"Heaven above forgive me!" exclaimed the artless girl. "In that case I wouldn't for the riches of the wide earth stand between you and God. But I didn't know that before, Denis; and if you had tould me, I think, sooner than get into sich a sin, I'd struggle to keep down my love for you, even although my heart should break."

"Poor darling," said Denis, taking her passive hand in his, "and would it go so hard with you? Break your heart! Do you love me so well as that, Susan?"

Susan's eyes turned on him for a moment, and the tears which his question drew forth gave it a full and a touching reply. She uttered not a word, but after a few deep sobs wiped her eyes, and endeavoured to compose her feelings.

Denis felt the influence of her emotions; he remained silent for a short time, during which, however, ambition drew in the background all those dimly splendid visions that associate themselves with the sacerdotal functions in a country where the people place no bounds to the spiritual power of their pastors.

"Susan," said he, after a pause, "do you know the difference between a Christian and a hathen?"

"Between a Christian an' a hathen? Why, aren't hathens all sinners?"

"Very right. Faith, Susan, you would have shone at the classics. You see, *dilecta cordis mei*, or, *cordi meo*, for either is good grammar—you see, Susan, the difference between a Christian and a hathen is this:—a Christian bears disappointments with fortitude—with what is denominated Christian fortitude; whereas, on the contrary, a hathen doesn't bear disappointments at all. Now, Susan, it would cut me to the heart to find that you would become a hathen on this touching and trying occasion."

"I'll pray to God, Denis. Isn't that the way to act under afflictions?"

"Decidedly. There is no other legitimate mode of quelling a heartache. And, Susan, when you go to supplication you are at liberty to

mention my name—no, not yet ; but if I were once consecrated you might. However, it is better to sink this ; say nothing about me when you pray, for, to tell you truth, I believe you have as much influence above—*super astra*—as I have. There is one argument which I am anxious to press upon you. It is a very simple but a very respectable one after all. I am not all Ireland. You will find excellent good husbands even in this parish. There is, as the old proverb says, as good fish in the *sea* as ever were caught. Do you catch one of them. For me, Susan, the vineyard claims me ; I must, as I said, cultivate the grape. We must, consequently—hem !—we must—hem ! hem !—consequently strive to forget—hem !—I say, to forget each other. It is a trial—I know—a desperate visitation, poor fawn, upon your feelings ; but, as I said, destiny will be triumphant. What is decreed, is decreed—I must go to Maynooth."

Susan rose, and her eyes flashed with an indignant sense of the cold-blooded manner in which he advised her to select another husband. She was an illiterate girl, but the purity of her feelings supplied the delicacy which reading and a knowledge of more refined society would have given her.

"Is it from *your* lips, Denis," she said, "that I hear sich a mane and low-minded an advice? Or do you think that with my weak and, I now see, foolish heart settled upon you, I could turn round and fix my love upon the first that might ax me? Denis, you promised before God to be mine, and mine only ; you often said and swore that you loved me above any human being : but I now see that you only intended to lead me into sin and disgrace, for indeed, and before God, I don't think—I don't—I don't—believe that you ever loved me."

A burst of grief, mingled with indignation and affliction, followed the words she had uttered. Denis felt himself called on for a vindication, and he was resolved to give it.

"Susan," he returned, "your imagination is erroneous. By all the classical authors that ever were written, you are antipodially opposed to facts. What harm is there, seeing that you and I can never be joined in wedlock—what harm is there, I say, in recommending you another husb——"

Susan would hear no more. She gathered up her stocking and ball of thread, placed them in her apron, went into her father's house, shut and bolted the door, and gave way to violent grief. All this occurred in a moment, and Denis found himself excluded.

He did not wish, however, to part from her in anger ; so after having attempted to look through the keyhole of the door, and applied his eye in vain to the window, he at length spoke.

"Is there anybody within but yourself, Susy?"

He received no reply.

"I say, Susy—*dilecta juventutis meæ*—touching the recommendation—now don't be crying—touching the recommendation of another husband, by all the classics that ever were mistranslated, I meant nothing but the purest of consolation. If I did, may I be reduced to primæval and aboriginal ignorance! But you know yourself that they

never prospered who prevented a *rara avis* like me from entering the Church—from labouring in the vineyard, and cultivating the grape. Don't be hathenish ; but act with a philosophy suitable to so dignified an occasion. Farewell ! *Macte virtute*, and be firm. I swear again, by all the class——"

The appearance of a neighbour caused him to cut short his oath. Seeing that the man approached the house, he drew off, and returned home, more seriously affected by Susan's agitation than he was willing to admit even to himself.

This triumph over his affection was, in fact, only the conquest of one passion over another. His attachment to Susan Connor was certainly sincere, and ere the prospects of his entering Maynooth were unexpectedly brought near him by the interference of Father Finnerty, his secret purpose all along had been to enter with her into the state of matrimony, rather than into the Church. Ambition, however, is beyond all comparison the most powerful principle of human conduct, and so Denny found it. Although his unceremonious abandonment of Susan appeared heartless and cruel, yet it was not effected on his part without profound sorrow and remorse. The two principles, when they began to struggle in his heart for supremacy, resembled the rival destinies of Cæsar and Mark Antony. Love declined in the presence of ambition ; and this in proportion as all the circumstances calculated to work upon the strong imagination of a young man, naturally fond of power, began to assume an appearance of reality. To be in the course of a few years a *bonâ fide* priest ; to possess unlimited sway over the fears and principles of the people ; to be endowed with spiritual gifts to he knew not what extent ; and to enjoy himself as he had an opportunity of seeing Father Finnerty and his curate do, in the full swing of convivial pleasure, upon the ample hospitality of those who, in addition to this, were ready to kiss the latchet of his shoes—were, it must be admitted, no inconsiderable motives in influencing the conduct of a person reared in a humble condition of life. The claims of poor Susan, her modesty, her attachment, and her beauty—were all insufficient to prevail against such a host of opposing motives ; and the consequence, though bitter, and subversive of her happiness, was a final determination on the part of Denny to acquaint her, with a kind of ex-officio formality, that all intercourse upon the subject of their mutual attachment must cease between them. Notwithstanding his boasted knowledge, however, he was ignorant of sentiment, and accordingly confined himself, as I have intimated, to a double species of argument ; that is to say, first, the danger and sin of opposing the wishes of the Church, which had claimed him, as he said, to labour in the vineyard ; and, secondly, the undoubted fact that there were plenty of good husbands besides himself in the world, from some one of which, he informed her, he had no doubt she could be accommodated.

In the meantime, her image, meek and fair and uncomplaining, would from time to time glide into his imagination ; and the melody of her voice send its music once more to his vacillating heart. He usually paused then, and almost considered himself under the influence

of a dream ; but ambition, with its train of shadowy honours, would immediately present itself, and Susan was again forgotten.

When he rejoined the company, to whom he had given the slip, he found them all gone, except about six or eight whom his father had compelled to stop for dinner. His mind was now much lighter than it had been before his interview with Susan, nor were his spirits at all depressed by perceiving that a new knife and fork lay glittering upon the dresser for his own particular use.

"Why, thin, where have you been all this time?" said the father ; "an' we wantin' to know whether you'd like the mutton to be boiled or roasted?"

"I was soliloquising in the glen below," replied Denny, once more resuming his pedantry—"meditating upon the transparency of all human events ; but as for the beef and mutton, I advise you to boil the beef and roast the mutton ; or, *vice versâ*, to boil the mutton and roast the beef. But I persave my mother has anticipated me, and boiled them both with that flitch of bacon that's playing the vagrant in the big pot there. *Tria juncta in uno*, as Horace says in the Epodes, when expatiating upon the Roman emperors—ehem!"

"Misther Denis," said one of those present, "maybe you'd tell us upon the watch what the hour is, if you plase, sir? myself never can know right at all, except by the shadow of the sun from the corner of our own gavel."

"Why," replied Denis, pulling it out with much pomp of manner, "it's just half-past two to a quarter of a minute and a few seconds."

"Why, thin, what a quare thing entirely a watch is," the other continued ; "now what makes you hould it to your ear, Misther Denis, if you plase?"

"The efficient cause of that, Larry, is that the drum of the ear—you persave, the drum of the ear—is enabled to catch the intonations produced by the machinery of its internal operations, otherwise the fact of applying it to the ear would be unnecessary—altogether unnecessary."

"Dear me! see what it is to have the knowledge, anyway! But isn't it quare how it moves of itself like a livin' crathur? How is that, Misther Denis?"

"Why, Larry—ehem—you see the motions of it are—that is, the works or operations—are all continually going ; and sure it is from that explanation that we say a watch *goes* well. That's more than you ever knew before, Larry."

"Indeed, it surely is, sir, an' is much oblaged to you, Misther Denis : sure if I ever come to wear a watch in my fob, I'll know something about it, anyhow."

For the remainder of that day Denis was as learned and consequential as ever; his friends, when their hearts were opened by his father's hospitality, promised him substantial aid in money, and in presents of such articles as they supposed might be serviceable to him in Maynooth. Denny received their proffers of support with suitable dignity and gratitude. A scene of bustle and preparation now com-

menced among them, nor was Denny himself the least engaged; for it somehow happened that, notwithstanding his profound erudition, he felt it necessary to read night and day in order to pass with more *éclat* the examination which he had to stand before the bishop ere his appointment to Maynooth. This ordeal was to occur upon a day fixed for the purpose in the ensuing month; and, indeed, Denis occupied as much of the intervening period in study as his circumstances would permit. His situation was, at this crisis, certainly peculiar. Every person related to him in the slightest degree contrived to revive their relationship; his former schoolfellows, on hearing that he was actually destined to be of the Church, renewed their acquaintance with him; and those who had been servants to his father took the liberty of speaking to him upon the strength of that fact. No child, to the remotest shade of affinity, was born for which he did not stand godfather; nieces and nephews thickened about him, all with remarkable talents, and many of them—particularly of the nieces—said to be exceedingly genteel, very thrifty for their ages, and likely to make excellent housekeepers. A strong likeness to himself was also pointed out in the features of his nephews, one of whom had his born nose—another his eyes—and a third, again, had his brave, high-flown way with him. In short, he began to feel some of the inconveniences of greatness, and, like it, to be surrounded by cringing servility and meanness. When he went to chapel, he was beset and followed from place to place by a retinue of friends, who were all anxious to secure to themselves the most conspicuous marks of his notice. It was the same thing in fair or market; they contended with each other who should do him most honour, or afford him and his father's immediate family the most costly treat, accompanied by the grossest expressions of flattery. Every male infant born among them was called Dionysius, and every female one Susan, after his favourite sister. All this, to a lad like Denis, already remarkable for his vanity, was very trying, or, rather, it absolutely turned his brain, and made him, probably, as finished a specimen of pride, self-conceit, and domineering arrogance, mingled with a lurking, humorous contempt for his cringing relations, as could be displayed in the person of some shallow but knavish prime minister, surrounded by his selfish sycophants, whom he encourages and despises.

At home he was idolized—overwhelmed with respect and deference. The slightest intimation of his wish was a command to them; the beef and fowl and mutton were at hand in all the variety of culinary skill, and not a soul in the house durst lay a hand upon his knife and fork but himself. In the morning, when the family were to be seen around the kitchen-table at their plain but substantial breakfast, Denis was lording it, in solitary greatness, over an excellent breakfast of tea and eggs in another room.

It was now, too, that the king's English, as well as the mutton, was carved and hacked to some purpose; epithets prodigiously long and foreign to the purpose were pressed into his conversation, for no other reason than because those to whom he spoke could not under-

stand them ; but the principal portion of his time was devoted to study. The bishop, he had heard, was a sound scholar, and scrupulous in recommending any to Maynooth except such as were well versed in the preparatory course. Independently of this, he was anxious, he said, to distinguish himself in his examination, and, if possible, to sustain as high a character with the bishop and his fellow-students as he did among the peasantry of his own neighbourhood.

At length the day approached. The bishop's residence was not distant more than a few hours' ride, and he would have sufficient time to arrive there, pass his examination, and return in time for dinner. On the eve of his departure old Denis invited Father Finnerty, his curate, and about a dozen relations and friends to dine with him the next day, when—Denis having surmounted the last obstacle to the accomplishment of his hopes—their hearts could open without a single reflection to check the exuberance of their pride, hospitality, and happiness.

I have often said to my friends, and I now repeat it in print, that after all there is no people bound up so strongly to each other by the ties of domestic life as the Irish. On the night which preceded this joyous and important day a spirit of silent but tender affection dwelt in every heart of the O'Shaughnessys. The great point of interest was the son. He himself was serious, and evidently laboured under that strong anxiety so natural to a youth in his circumstances. A Roman Catholic bishop, too, is a personage looked upon by the people with a kind of feeling that embodies in it awe, reverence, and fear. Though, in this country, a humble man possessing neither the rank in society, outward splendour, nor the gorgeous profusion of wealth and pomp which characterise a prelate of the Established Church, yet it is unquestionable that the gloomy dread, and sense of formidable power, with which they impress the minds of the submissive peasantry, immeasurably surpass the more legitimate influence which any Protestant dignitary could exercise over those who stand, with respect to him, in a more rational and independent position.

It was not surprising that Denis, who practised upon ignorant people that petty despotism for which he was so remarkable, should now, on coming in contact with great spiritual authority, adopt his own principles, and relapse from the proud pedant into the cowardly slave. True it is that he presented a most melancholy specimen of independence in a crisis where moral courage was so necessary ; but his dread of the coming day was judiciously locked up in his own bosom. His silence and apprehension were imputed to the workings of a mind learnedly engaged in arranging the vast stores of knowledge with which it was so abundantly stocked ; his moody picture of the bishop's brow, his reflection that he was going before a sacred person, as a candidate for the Church, with his heart yet redolent of earthly affection for Susan Connor, his apprehension that the bishop's spiritual scent might sagaciously smell it out, were all put down by the family to the credit of uncommon learning, which, as his mother observed truly, "often makes men do quare things." His embarrassments, however,

inasmuch as they were ascribed by them to wrong causes, endeared him more to their hearts than ever. Because he spoke little, neither the usual noise nor bustle of a large family disturbed the silence of the house : every word was uttered that evening in a low tone, at once expressive of tenderness and respect. The family supper was tea, in compliment to Denis ; and they all partook of it with him. Nothing humbles the mind and gives the natural feelings their full play so well as a struggle in life, or the appearance of its approach.

" Denis," said the father, " the time will come when we won't have you at all among us ; but, thank goodness, you'll be in a betther place."

Denis heard him not, and consequently made no reply.

" They say Maynewth's a tryin' place, too," he continued, " an' I'd be sorry to see him pulled down to an atomy, like some of the scarecrows that come out of it. I hope you'll bear it betther."

" Do you speak to me ?" said Denis, awaking out of a reverie.

" I do, *sir*," replied the father ; and as he uttered the words the son perceived that his eyes were fixed upon him with an expression of affectionate sorrow and pride.

The youth was then in a serious mood, free from the dominion of that learned *mania* under which he had so frequently signalised himself : the sorrow of his father, and a consciousness of the deep affection and unceasing kindness which he had ever experienced from him, joined to a recollection of their former friendly disputes and companionship, touched Denny to the quick. But the humility with which he applied to him the epithet *sir*, touched him most. " What !" thought he, "ought my affectionate father to be thrown such a distance from a son who owes everything to his love and goodness !" The thought of his stooping so humbly before him smote the boy's heart, and the tears glistened in his eyes.

" Father," said he, " you have been kind and good to me beyond my deserts ; surely, then, I cannot bear to hear you address me in that manner, as if we were both strangers. Nor while I am with you shall any of you so address me. Remember that I am still your son."

The natural affection displayed in this speech soon melted the whole family into tears—not excepting Denis himself, who felt that grief which we experience when about to be separated for the first time from those we love.

" Come over, avourneen," said his mother, drying her eyes with the corner of her check apron : " come over, acushla machree, an' sit beside me ; sure, although we're sorry for you, Denis, it's proud our hearts are out of you, an' good right we have, a suilish ! Come over, an' let me be near you as long as I can, anyway."

Denis placed himself beside her, and the proud mother drew his head over her bosom, and bedewed his face with a gush of tears.

" They say," she observed, " that it's sinful to shed tears when there's no occasion for grief ; but I hope it's no sin to cry when one's heart is full of somethin' that brings them to one's eyes, whether they will or not."

"Mave," said the father, "*I'll* miss him more nor any of you: but sure he'll often send letters to us from Maynewth, to tell us how he's gettin' on; an' we'll be proud enough, never fear."

"You'll miss me, Denis," said his favourite sister, who was also called Susan; "for you'll find no one in Maynewth that will keep your linen so white as I did: but never fear, I'll be always knittin' you stockins; an' every year I'll make you half a dozen shirts, an' you'll think them more natural nor other shirts, when you know they came from your own home—from them that you love! Won't you, Denis?"

"I will, Susy, and I will love the shirts for the sake of the hands that made them."

"And I won't allow Susy Connor to help me as she used to do: they'll be all Alley's sewin' and mine."

"The poor colleen—listen to her!" exclaimed the affectionate father: "indeed, you will, Susy; ay, and hem his cravats, that we'll send him ready made an' all."

"Yes," replied Denis, "but as to Susy Connor—hem—why, upon considera—he—hem—upon second thoughts, I don't see why you should prevent her from helping you; she's a neighbour's daughter, and a well-wisher, of whose prosperity in life I'd always wish to hear."

"The poor girl's very bad in her health for the last three weeks," observed his other sister, Alley: "she has lost her appetite, an' is cast down entirely in her spirits. You ought to go an' see her, Denis, before you set out for the college, if it was only on her dacent father's account. When I was tellin' her yisterday that you wor to get the bishop's letter for Maynewth to-morrow, she was in so poor a state of health that she nearly fainted. I had to give her a drink of wather, and sprinkle her face with it. Well, she's a purty crathur an' a good girl, an' was always that, dear knows!"

"Denis, achree," said his mother, somewhat alarmed, "are you any way unwell? Why, your heart's batin' like a new catched chicken! Are you sick, acushla; or are you used to this?"

"It won't signify," replied Denis, gently raising himself from his mother's arms, "I will sit up, mother; it's but a sudden stroke or two of *tremor cordis*, produced probably by having my mind too much upon one object."

"I think," said his father, "he will be the betther of a little drop of the poteen made into punch, an' for that matter we can all take a sup of it; as there's no one here but ourselves, we will have it snug an' comfortable."

Nothing resembles an April day more than the general disposition of the Irish people. When old Denis's proposal for the punch was made, the gloom which hung over the family—originating, as it did, more in joy than in sorrow—soon began to disappear. Their countenances gradually brightened, by-and-by mirth stole out, and ere the punch had accomplished its first round, laughter, and jest, and good-humour—each, in consequence of the occasion, more buoyant and

vivacious than usual, were in full play. Denis himself, when animated by the unexcised liquor, threw off his dejection, and ere the night was half spent, found himself in the highest region of pedantry.

"I would not," said he, "turn my back upon any other candidate in the province in point of preparatory excellence and ardency of imagination. I say, sitting here beside you, my worthy and logical father, I would not retrograde from any candidate for the honours of the Catholic Church in the province—in the kingdom—in Europe; and it is not improbable but I might progradiate another step, and say Christendom at large. And now what's a candidate? Father, you have some apprehension in you, and are a passable second-hand controversialist—what's a candidate? Will you tell me?"

"I give it up, Denis; but you'll tell us."

"Yes, I will tell you. Candidate signifies a man dressed in fustian; it comes from *candidus*, which is partly Greek, partly Latin, and partly Hebrew. It was the learned designation for Irish linen, too, which, in the time of the Romans, was in great request at Rome; but it was changed to signify fustian, because it was found that everything a man promised, on becoming a candidate for any office, turned out to be only fustian when he got it."

"Denis, avourneen," said his mother, "the greatest comfort myself has is to be thinkin' that when you're a priest you can be sayin' masses for my poor sinful sowl."

"Yes, there is undoubtedly comfort in that reflection; and depend upon it, my dear mother, that I'll be sure to *clinch* your masses in the surest mode. I'll not fly over them like Camilla across a field of potato oats, without discommoding a single walk, as too many of my worthy brethren—I mane as too many of those whose worthy brother I will soon be—do in this present year of grace. I'm no fool at the Latin, but, as I'm an unworthy candidate for Maynooth, I cannot even understand every fifteenth word they say when reading mass, independently of the utter scorn with which they treat those two scholastic old worthies called Syntax and Prosody."

"Denis," said the father, "nothing would give me greater delight than to be present at your first mass an' your first sarmon; and next to that would I like to be stumpin' about wid a dacent staff in my hand, maybe wid a bit of silver on the head of it, takin' care of your place when you'd have a parish."

"At all events, if you're not with me, father, I'll keep you comfortable wherever you'll be, whether in this world or the other; for, plase goodness, I'll have some influence in both. When I get a parish, however, it is not improbable that I may have occasion to see company; the neighbouring gentlemen will be apt to relish my society, particularly those who are addicted to conviviality; and our object will be to render ourselves as populous as possible; now, whether in that case it would be compatible—but never fear, father, whilst I have the means, you or one of the family shall never want."

"Will you let the people be far behind in their dues, Denis?" inquired Brian.

"No, no—leave that point to my management. Depend upon it, I'll have them like mice before me—ready to run into the first augur-hole they meet. I'll collect lots of oats, and get as much yarn every year as would clothe three regiments of militia, or, for that matther, of dragoons. I'll appoint my stations, too, in the snuggest farmers' houses in the parish, just as Father Finnerty, our worthy parochial priest, ingeniously contrives to do. And, to revert secondarily to the collection of the oats, I'll talk liberally to the Protestant boddaghs; give the Presbyterians a learned homily upon civil and religious freedom; make hard hits with them at that INCUBUS, the Established Church; and, never fear, but I shall fill bag after bag with good corn from many of both creeds."

"That," said Brian, "will be givin' them the bag to hould in arnest."

"No, Brian, but it will be makin' them fill the bag when I hold it, which will be better still."

"But," said Susan, "who'll keep house for you? You know that a priest can't live widout a housekeeper."

"That, Susy," replied Denis, "is, and will be, the most difficult point on which to accomplish anything like a satisfactory determination. I have nieces enough, however. There's Peter Finnegan's eldest daughter, Mary, and Hugh Tracy's Ailsey—(to whom he added about a dozen and a half more)—together with several yet to be endowed with existence, all of whom will be brisk candidates for the situation."

"I don't think," replied Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, "that you'll ever get anyone who'd be more comfortable about you nor your own ould mother. What do you think of takin' myself, Denis?"

"Ay, but consider the accomplishments in the culinary art—*in re vel in arte culinaria*—which will be necessary for my housekeeper to know. How would you, for instance, dress a dinner for the bishop if he happened to pay me a visit, as you may be certain he will? How would you make pies and puddings, and disport your fancy through all the varieties of roast and boil? How would you dress a fowl that it would stand upon a dish as if it was going to dance a hornpipe? How would you amalgamate the different *genera* of wine with boiling fluid and crystallised saccharine matter? How would you dispose of the various dishes upon the table according to high life and mathematics? Wouldn't you be too old to bathe my feet when I'd be unwell? Wouldn't you be too old to bring me my whey in the morning as soon as I'd awake, perhaps with a severe headache, after the plenary indulgence of a clerical compotation? Wouldn't you be too old to sit up till the middle of the nocturnal hour, awaiting my arrival home? Wouldn't you be ——"

"Hut, tut, that's enough, Denny, I'd never do at all. No, no, but I'll sit a clane dacent ould woman in the corner upon a chair that you'll get made for me! There I'll be wid my pipe and tobacco, smokin' at my ase, chattin' to the sarvints, and sometimes discoorsin' the neighbours that'll come to inquire for you, when they'll be sittin'

in the kitchen waitin' till you get through your office. Jist let me have that, Dinny, achora, and I'll be as happy as the day's long."

"And I on the other side," said his father, naturally enough struck with the happy simplicity of the picture which his wife drew, "on the other side, Mave, a snug, dacent ould man, chattin' to you across the fire, proud to see the bishop an' the gintlemen about him. An' I wouldn't ax to be taken into the parlour at all, except, maybe, when there would be nobody there but yourself, Denis; an' that your mother an' I would go into the parlour to get a glass of punch, or, if it could be spared, a little taste of wine for novelty."

"And so you shall, both of you—you, father, at one side of the hob, and my mother here at the other, the king and queen of my culinary dominions. But practise taciturnity a little—I'm visited by the muse, and must indulge in a strain of vocal melody—hem—'tis a few lines of my own composure, the offspring of a moment of inspiration by the nine female Heliconians; but before I anticipate, here's to my own celebrity to-morrow, and afterwards all your healths!"

He then proceeded to sing in his best style a song composed, as he said, by himself, but which, as the composition was rather an eccentric one, we decline giving.

"Denis," said his brother, "you'll have great sport at the stations."

"Yes, Brian, most inimitable specimen of fraternity, I do look into the futurity of a station with great complacency. Hem—in the morning I rise up in imagination, and after reading part of my office, I and my curate—*ego et coadjutor meus*—or if I get a large parish, perhaps I and my two curates—*ego et coadjutores mei*—order our horses, and of a fine calm summer morning we mount them as gracefully as three troopers. The sun is up, and of coorse the moon is down, and the glitter of the light, the sparkling of the dew, the canticles of the birds, and the melodious cawing of the crows in Squire Grimshaw's rookery——"

"Why, Denis, is it *this* parish you'll have?"

"Silence, silence, till I complate my rural ideas—in some gentleman's rookery, at all events; the thrush here, the blackbird there, the corncraik chanting its varied note in another place, and so on. In the meantime, we reverend sentimentalists advance, gazing with odoriferous admiration upon the prospect about us, and expatiating in the purest of Latin upon the beauties of unsophisticated nature. When we meet the peasants going out to their work, they put their hands to their hats for us; but as I am known to be the parochial priest, it is to me the salutation is directed, which I return with the air of a man who thinks nothing of such things; but, on the contrary, knows them to be his due. The poor creatures of curates, you must know, don't presume to speak of themselves, but simply answer whenever I condescend to propose conversation, for I'll keep them down, never fear. In this edifying style we proceed—I a few steps in advance, and they at a respectful distance behind me, the heads of their horses just to my saddle skirts—my clerical boots as brilliant as the countenance of Phœbus when decked with rosy smiles, theirs more subordinately

polished, for there should be gradations in all things, and humility is the first of virtues in a Christian curate. My bunch of goold sales stands out proudly from my anterior rotundity, for by this time, plase God, I'll be getting frolicsome and corpulent; they with only a poor bit of ribbon, and a single twopenny kay, stained with verdigrac' In the meantime, we come within sight of the wealthy farmer's house wherein we are to hold the edifying solemnity of a station. There is a joyful appearance of study and bustle about the premises; the peasantry are flocking towards it, dressed in their best clothes; the proprietors of the mansion itself are running out to try if we are in appearance, and the very smoke disports itself hilariously in the air, and bounds up as if it was striving to catch the first glimpse of the clargy. When we approach, the good man—*pater familias*—comes out to meet us, and the good woman—*mater familias*—comes curtsying from the door to give us the *kead millia failtha.* No sooner do we persave ourselves noticed, than out comes the Breviary, and in a moment we are at our morning devotions. I, being the rector, am particularly grave and dignified. I do not speak much, but am rather sharp, and order the curates, whom I treat, however, with great respect before the people, instantly to work. This impresses those who are present with awe and reverence for us all, especially for Father O'Shaughnessy *himself*—(that's me). I then take a short turn or two across the floor, silently perusing my office, after which I lay it aside and relax into a little conversation with the people of the house, to show that I can conciliate by love as readily as I can impress them with fear; for, you see, *divide et impera* is as aptly applied to the passions as to maxims of state policy—ehem. I then go to my tribunal, and first hear the man and woman and family of the house, and afther them the other penitents, according as they can come to me.

"Thus we go on absolving in great style, till it is time for the matutinal meal—vulgarly called breakfast; when the whisky, eggs, toast, and tea as strong as Hercules, with ham, fowl, beef-steaks, or mutton-chops, all pour in upon us in the full tide of hospitality. Helter-skelter, cut and thrust, right and left, we work away, till the appetite reposes itself upon the cushion of repletion: and off we go once more, full and warm, to the delicate employment of adjudicating upon sin and transgression, until dinner comes, when, having despatched *as many as possible*—for the quicker we get through them the better—we set about despatching what is always worth a ship-load of such riff-raff—videlicet, a good and extensive dinner. Oh, ye pagan gods of eating and drinking, Bacchus and—let me see who the presiding deity of good feeding was in the Olympian synod—as I'm an unworthy candidate, I forget that topic of learning; but no matter, *non constat.* Oh, ye pagan professors of ating and drinking, Bacchus, Epicurus, and St. Heliogabalus, Anthony of Padua, and Paul the Hermit, who poached for his own venison, St. Tuck and St. Tak'em, St. Drinkem and St. Eatem, with all ye other reverend worthies, who bore the blushing honours of the table thick upon your noses, come and inspire

your unworthy candidate, while he essays to chant the praises of a station dinner!

"Then, then, does the priest appropriate to himself his due share of enjoyment. Then does he, like Elias, throw his garment of inspiration upon his coadjutors. Then is the goose cut up, and the farmer's distilled Latin is found to be purer and more edifying than the distillation of Maynooth.

> 'Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring,
> A little learning is a dangerous thing.'

And so it is, as far as this inspiring language is concerned. A station dinner is the very pinnacle of a priest's happiness. There is the fun and frolic; then does the lemon-juice of mirth and humour come out of their reverences, like secret writing, as soon as they get properly warm. The song and the joke, the laugh and the leer, the shaking of hands, the making of matches, and the projection of weddings, the nipping on the ribs, and the pressing of the toes, the poking and the joking—och, I must conclude, or my brisk fancy will dissolve in the deluding vision! Here's to my celebrity to-morrow, and may the bishop catch a Tarthar in your son, my excellent and logical father! —as I tell you among ourselves he will do. Mark me, I say it, but it's *inter nos*, it won't go further; but should he trouble me with profundity, I'll make a *ludibrium* of him."

"But you forget the weddings and christenings, Denis; you'll have great sport at them too."

"I can't remember three things at a time, Brian: but you are mistaken, however; I had them snug in one corner of my cranium. The weddings and the christenings! do you think I'll have nothing to do in them, you *stultus*, you?"

"But, Denis, is there any harm in the priests enjoying themselves, and they so holy as we know they are?" inquired his mother.

"Not the least in life; considering what severe fasting and great praying they have; besides, it's necessary for them to take something to put the sins of the people out of their heads, and that's one reason why they are often jolly at stations."

"My goodness, what light Denis can throw upon anything!"

"Not without deep study, mother; but let us have another portion of punch each, afther which I'll read a Latin *De Profundis*, and we'll go to bed. I must be up early to-morrow; and, Brian, you'll please to have the black mare saddled and my spur brightened as jinteely as you can, for I must go in as much state and grandeur as possible."

Accordingly, in due time, after hearing the *De Profundis*, which Denis read in as sonorous a tone, and as pompous a manner, as he could assume, they went to bed for the night, to dream of future dignities for their relative.

When Denis appeared the next morning it was evident that the spirit of prophecy in which he had contemplated the enjoyments annexed to his ideal station on the preceding night had departed from him He was pale and anxious, as in the early part of the previous

evening. At breakfast, his very appetite treacherously abandoned him, despite the buttered toast and eggs which his mother forced upon him with such tender assiduity, in order, she said, to make him stout against the bishop. Her solicitations, however, were in vain; after attempting to eat to no purpose, he arose and began to prepare himself for his journey. This, indeed, was a work of considerable importance, for, as they had no looking-glass, he was obliged to dress himself over a tub of water, in which, since truth must be told, he saw a very cowardly visage. In due time, however, he was ready to proceed upon his journey, apparelled in a new suit of black that sat stiffly and awkwardly upon him, crumpled in a manner that enabled any person at a glance to perceive that it was worn for the first time.

When he was setting out, his father approached him with a small jug of holy water in his hand. "Denis," said he, "I think you won't be the worse of a sprinkle of this," and he accordingly was about to shake it with a little brush over his person, when Denis arrested his hand.

"Easy, father," he replied, "you don't remember that my new clothes are on. I'll just take a little with my fingers, for you know one drop is as good as a thousand."

"I know that," said the father, "but on the other hand you know it's not *lucky* to refuse it."

"I didn't refuse it," rejoined Denis, "I surely took a *quantum suff.* of it with my own hand."

"It was very near a refusal," said the father, in a disappointed and somewhat sorrowful tone; "but it can't be helped now. I'm only sorry you put it and *quantum suff.* in connection at all. *Quantum suff.* is what Father Finnerty says when he will take no more punch; it doesn't argue respect in you to make as little of a jug of holy wather as he does of a jug of punch."

"I'm sorry for it, too," replied Denis, who was every whit as superstitious as his father; "and to atone for my error, I desire you will sprinkle me all over with it—clothes and all."

The father complied with this, and Denis was setting out, when his mother exclaimed, "Blessed be them above us, Denis More! Look at the boy's legs! There's luck. Why, one of his stockins has the wrong side out, and it's upon the right leg too! Well, this will be a fortunate day for you, Denis, anyway; the same thing never happened myself but something good followed it."

This produced a slight conflict between Denis's personal vanity and superstition; but on this occasion superstition prevailed: he even felt his spirits considerably elevated by the incident, mounted the mare, and after jerking himself once or twice in the saddle, to be certain that all was right, he touched her with the spur, and set out to be examined by the bishop, exclaiming as he went, "Let his lordship take care that I don't make a *ludibrium* of him."

The family at that moment all came to the door, where they stood looking after and admiring him, until he turned a corner of the road and left their sight.

Many were the speculations entered into during his absence as to the fact whether or not he would put down the bishop in the course of the examination ; some of them holding that he could do so if he wished ; but others of them denying that it was possible for him, inasmuch as he had never received holy orders.

The day passed, but not in the usual way, in Denis More O'Shaughnessy's. The females of the family were busily engaged in preparing for the dinner, to which Father Finnerty, his curate, and several of their nearest and wealthiest friends had been invited ; and the men in clearing out the stables and other offices for the horses of the guests. Pride and satisfaction were visible on every face, and that disposition to cordiality, and to the oblivion of everything unpleasant to the mind, marked, in a prominent manner, their conduct and conversation. Old Denis went, and voluntarily spoke to a neighbour with whom he had not exchanged a word, except in anger, for some time. He found him at work in the field, and, advancing with open hand and heart, he begged his pardon for any offence he might have given him.

"My son," said he, "is goin' to Maynooth ; and as he is a boy that we have a good right to be proud of, and as our friends are comin' to ate their dinner wid us to-day, and as—as my heart is too full to bear ill-will against any livin' sowl, let alone a man that I know to be sound at the heart, in spite of all that has come between us—I say, Darby, I forgive you, and I expect pardon for my share of the offence. There's the hand of an honest man—let us be as neighbours ought to be, and not divided into parties and factions against one another, as we have been too long. Take your dinner wid us to-day, and let us hear no more about ill-will and unkindness."

"Denis," said his friend, "it ill becomes you to spake first. 'Tis I that ought to do that, and to do it long ago, too ; but you see, somehow, so long as it was to be decided by blows between the families, I'd never give in. Not but that *I* might do so, but my sons, Denis, wouldn't hear of it. Throth, I'm glad of this, and so will they, too ; for only for the honour and glory of houldin' out, we might be all friends through other long ago. And I'll tell you what, we couldn't do better, the two factions of us, nor join and thrash them Haigneys, that always put between us."

"No, Darby, I tell you I bear no ill-will, no bad thoughts, agin any born Christian this day, and I won't hear of that. Come to us about five o'clock : we're to have Father Finnerty, and Father Farrell, his curate : all friends, man, all friends ; and Denny, God guard him this day, will be home, afther passin' the bishop, about four o'clock."

"I always thought that gorsoon would come to somethin'. Why, it was wondherful how he used to discoorse upon the chapel-green, yourself and himself : but he soon left you behind. And how he sealed up poor ould Dixon the parish clark's mouth, at Barny Boccagh's wake. God rest his soul. It was talkin' about the Protestant Church they wor. 'Why,' said Misther Denis, 'you ould termagant, can you tell me who first discovered your Church ?' The dotin' ould crathur began of hummin' and hawin', and advisin' the boy to have more sense.

'Come,' said he, 'you ould canticle, can you answer? But for fear you can't, I'll answer for you. It was the divil discovered it one fine mornin' that he went to get an appetite, bein' in delicate health.' Why, Denis, you'd tie all that wor present wid a rotten sthraw."

"Darby, I ax your pardon over agin for what came between us; and I see now, betther than I did, that the fault of it was more mine nor yours. You'll be down surely about five o'clock."

"I must go and take this beard off o' me, and clane myself; and I may as well do that now: but I'll be down, never fear."

"In throth the boy was always bright!—ha, ha, ha!—and he sobered Dixon?"

"Had him like a judge in no time."

"Oh, he could do it—he could do that, at all times. God be wid you, Darby, till I see you in the evenin'."

"*Bannight lhath*, Denis, an' I'm proud we're as we ought to be."

About four o'clock the guests began to assemble at Denis's; and about the same hour one might perceive Susan O'Shaughnessy running out to a stile a little above the house, where she stood for a few minutes, with her hand shading her eyes, looking long and intensely towards the direction from which she expected her brother to return. Hitherto, however, he could not be discovered in the distance, although scarcely five minutes elapsed during the intervals of her appearance at the stile to watch him. Some horsemen she did notice; but after straining her eyes eagerly and anxiously, she was enabled only to report, with a dejected air, that they were their own friends coming from a distant part of the parish to be present at the dinner. At length, after a long and eager look, she ran in with an exclamation of delight, saying:

"Thank goodness, he's comin' at last; I see somebody dressed in black ridin' down the upper end of Tim Marly's *boreen*, an' I'm sure an' certain it must be Denis, from his dress!"

"I'll warrant it is, my colleen," replied her father; "he said he'd be here before the dinner would be ready, an' it's widin a good hour of that. I'll thry myself."

He and his daughter once more went out; but, alas! only to experience a fresh disappointment. Instead of Denis, it was Father Finnerty; who, it appeared, felt as anxious to be in time for dinner as the young candidate himself could have done. He was advancing at a brisk trot, *not* upon the colt which had been presented to him, but upon his old nag, which seemed to feel as eager to get at Denis's oats as its owner did to taste his mutton.

"I see, Susy, we'll have a day of it, plase goodness," observed Denis to the girl: "here's Father Finnerty, and I wouldn't for more nor I'll mention that he had stayed away; and I hope the *cowjuther* will come as well as himself. Do you go in, aroon, and tell them he's comin', and I'll go and meet him."

Most of Denis's friends were now assembled, dressed in their best apparel, and raised to the highest pitch of good-humour; for no man who knows the relish with which Irishmen enter into convivial enjoyments can be ignorant of the remarkable flow of spirits which

the prospect of an abundant and hospitable dinner produces among them.

Father Finnerty was one of those priests who constitute a numerous species in Ireland ; regular, but loose and careless, in the observances of his Church, he could not be taxed with any positive neglect of pastoral duty. He held his stations at stated times and places with great exactness, but when the severer duties annexed to them were performed, he relaxed into the boon companion, sang his song, told his story, laughed his laugh, and occasionally danced his dance, the very beau ideal of a rough, shrewd, humorous divine, who, amidst the hilarity of convivial mirth, kept an eye to his own interest, and sweetened the severity with which he exacted his "dues" by a manner at once jocose and familiar. If a wealthy farmer had a child to christen, his reverence declined baptizing it in the chapel, but as a proof of his marked respect for its parents, he and his curate did them the honour of performing the ceremony at their own house. If a marriage was to be solemnized, provided the parties were wealthy, he adopted the same course, and manifested the same flattering mark of his particular esteem for the parties, by attending at their residence ; or if they preferred the pleasure of a journey to his own house, he and his curate accompanied them home from the same motives. This condescension, whilst it raised the pride of the parties, secured a good dinner and a pleasant evening's entertainment for the priests, enhanced their humility exceedingly, for the more they enjoyed themselves, the more highly did their friends consider themselves honoured. This mode of life might, one would suppose, lessen their importance and that personal respect which is entertained for the priests by the people ; but it is not so—the priests can, the moment such scenes are ended, pass, with the greatest aptitude of habit, into the hard, gloomy character of men who are replete with profound knowledge, exalted piety, and extraordinary power. The sullen frown, the angry glance, or the mysterious allusion to the omnipotent authority of the Church, as vested in their persons, joined to some unintelligible dogma, laid down as their authority, are always sufficient to check anything derogatory towards them, which is apt to originate in the unguarded moments of conviviality.

"Plase your reverence, I'll put him up myself," said Denis to Father Finnerty, as he took his horse by the bridle, and led him towards the stable, "and how is *my* cowlt doin' wid you, sir ?"

"Troublesome, Denis ; he was in a bad state when I got him, and he'll cost me nearly his price before I have him thoroughly broke."

"He was pretty well broke wid me, I know," replied Denis, "and I'm afeard you've given him into the hands of someone that knows little about horses. Mave," he shouted, passing the kitchen door, "here's Father Finnerty—go in, docthor, and put big Brian Buie out o' the corner ; for goodness' sake, *eximnicate* him from the hob—an' sure you have power to do that, anyway."

The priest laughed, but immediately assuming a grave face, as he entered, exclaimed :

"Brian Buie, in the name of the forty-seventh proposition of Euclid's Elements—in the name of the cube and square roots of Algebra, Mathematics, Fluxions, and the doctrine of all essential spirits that admit of proof—in the name of Nebuchadanezar the divine, who invented the convenient scheme of taking a cold collation under a hedge—by the power of that profound branch of learning, the Greek Digamma—by the authority of true Latin, *primo*, of Beotian Greek, *secundo*, and of Arabian Hebrew, *tertio;* which is, when united by the skill of profound erudition, *primo, secundo, tertio;* or, being reversed by the logic of illustration, *tertio, secundo, primo. Commando te in nomine botteli, potherni boni drinkandi his œdibus, hac nocte, inter amicos excellentissimi amici mei, Dionisii O'Shaughnessy, quem beknavavi ex excellentissimo colto ejus, causa pedantissimi filii ejus, designati ecclesiæ, patri, sed nequaquam aeo, nec naturæ, nec ingenio; commando te, inquam, Bernarde Buie, surgere, stare, ambulare, et decedere e cornero isto vel hobbo, quo nunc sedes!* Yes, I command thee, Brian Buie, who sit upon the hob of my worthy and most excellent friend and parishioner, Denis O'Shaughnessy, to rise, to stand up before your spiritual superior, to walk down from it, and to tremble as if you were about to sink into the earth to the neck, but no further; —before the fulminations of him who can wield the thunder of that mighty Salmoneus, his holiness the Pope, successor to St. Peter, who left the servant of the centurion earless, I command and objurgate thee, sinner as thou art, to vacate your seat on the hob for a man of sanctity, whose legitimate possession it is; otherwise I shall send you, like that worthy archbishop, the aforesaid Nebuchadanezar, to live upon leeks for seven years in the renowned kingdom of Wales, where the leeks may be seen to this day! Presto!"

These words, pronounced with a grave face, in a loud, rapid, and sonorous tone of voice, startled the good people of the house, who sat mute and astonished at such an exordium from the worthy pastor; but no sooner had he uttered Brian Buie's name, giving him, at the same time, a fierce and authoritative look, than the latter started to his feet, and stepped down in a kind of alarm towards the door. The priest immediately placed his hand upon his shoulder in a mysterious manner, exclaiming:

"Don't be alarmed, Brian, I have taken the force of the *anathema* off you; your power to sit, or stand, or go where you please is returned again. I wanted your seat, and Denis desired me to excommunicate you out of it, which I did, and you accordingly left it without your own knowledge, consent, or power; I transferred you to where you stand, and you had no more strength to resist me than if you were an infant not three hours in the world!"

"I ax God's pardon, an' your reverence's," said Brian, in a tremor, "if I have given offince. Now, bless my soul! what's this? As sure as I stand before you, neighbours, I know neither act nor part of how I was brought from the hob at all—neither act nor part. Did any of yees see me lavin' it; or how did I come here—can yees tell me?"

"Paddy," said one of his friends, "did you see him?"

"The sorra one o' me seen him," replied Paddy; "I was lookin' at his reverence, sthrivin' to know what he was sayin'."

"Pether, did you?" another inquired.

"Me! I never seen a stim of him till he was standin' alone on the flure! Sure, when he didn't see or find himself goin', how could another see him?"

"Glory be to God!" exclaimed Mave; "one ought to think well what they say when they spake of the clargy, for they don't know what it may bring down upon them, sooner or later!"

"Our Denis will be able to do that yet," said Susan to her eldest sister.

"To be sure he will, *girsha*, as soon as he's ordained—every bit as well as Father Finnerty," replied Mary.

The young enthusiast's countenance brightened as her sister spoke: her dark eye became for a minute or two fixed upon vacancy, during which it flashed several times; until, as the images of her brother's future glory passed before her imagination, she became wrapt—her lip quivered—her cheek flushed into a deeper colour, and the tears burst in gushes from her eyes.

The mother, who was now engaged in welcoming Father Finnerty—a duty which the priest's comic miracle prevented her from performing sooner—did not perceive her daughter's agitation, nor, in fact, did anyone present understand its cause. Whilst the priest was taking Brian Buie's seat, she went once more to watch the return of Denis; and while she stood upon the stile, her father, after having put up the horse, entered the house, "to keep his reverence company."

"An' pray, docthor," he inquired, "where is Father Molony, that he's not wid you? I hope he won't disappoint us; he's a mighty pleasant gintleman of an evenin', an', barrin' your reverence, I don't know a man that tells a betther story."

"He entreated permission from me this morning," replied Father Finnerty, "and that was leave to pay a visit to the bishop; for what purpose I know not, unless to put in a word in season for the first parish that becomes vacant."

"Throth, an' he well desarves a parish," replied Denis; "an' although we'd be loth to part wid him, still we'd be proud to hear of his promotion."

"He'll meet Denis there," observed Susan, who had returned from the stile: "he'll be apt to be present at his trial wid the bishop; an' maybe he'll be home along wid him. I'll go an' thry if I can see them agin," and she flew once more to watch their return.

"Now, Father Finnerty," said an uncle of Denis's, "you can give a good guess at what a dacent parish ought to be worth to a parish priest?"

"Mrs. O'Shaughnessy," said the priest, "is that fat brown goose, suspended before the fire, of your own rearing?"

"Indeed it is, plase your reverence; but as far as good male an' phaties could go, for the last month it got the benefit of them."

"And pray, Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, have you many of the same

kidney? I only ask for information, as I said to Peery Hacket's wife, the last day I held the station in Peery's. There was just such another goose hanging before the fire; but, you must know, the cream of the joke was that I had been after coming from the confessional, as hungry as a man could conveniently wish himself; and seeing the brown fat goose before the fire, just as this is, why my teeth, Mave, began to get lachrymose. Upon my priesthood, it was such a goose as a priest's corpse might get up on its elbow to look at, and exclaim, '*Avourneen machree*, it's a thousand pities that I'm not living to have a cut at you!'—ha, ha, ha! God be good to old Friar Hennessy, I have that joke from him.

"'Well, Mrs. Hacket,' says I, as I was airing my fingers at the fire, 'I daresay you haven't another goose like this about the house? Now, tell me, like an honest woman, have you any of the same kidney? —I only ask for information.'

"Mrs. Hacket, however, told me she believed there might be *a few* of the same kind straggling about the place, but said nothing further upon it until the Saturday following, when her son brings me down a pair of the fattest geese I ever cut up for my Sunday's dinner. Now, Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, wasn't that doing the thing *dacent?*"

"Well, well, docthor," said Denis, "that was all right; let Mave alone, an' maybe she'll be apt to find out a pair that will match Mrs. Hacket's. Not that I say it, but she doesn't like to be outdone in anything."

"Docthor, I was wishin' to know, sir," continued the uncle of the absent *candidate*, "what the value of a good parish might be."

"I think, Mave, there's a discrepancy between the goose and the shoulder of mutton. The fact is, that if it be a disputation between them as to which will be roasted first, I pronounce that the goose will have it. It's now, let me see, half-past four o'clock, and in my opinion it will take a full half-hour to bring up the mutton. So, Mave, if you'll be guided by your priest, advance the mutton towards the fire about two inches, and keep the *girsha* basting steadily, and then you'll be sure to have it rich and juicy."

"Docthor, wid submission, I was wantin' to know what a good parish might be ——"

"Mike Lawdher, if I don't mistake, you ought to have good grazing down in your meadows at Ballinard. What will you be charging for a month or two's grass for this colt I've bought from my dacent friend, Denis O'Shaughnessy, here? And, Mike, be rasonable upon a poor man, for we're all poor, being only tolerated by the State we live under, and ought not, of coorse, to be hard upon one another."

"An' what did he cost you, docthor?" replied Mike, answering one question by another; "what did you get for him, Denis?" he continued, referring for information to Denis, to whom, on reflection, he thought it more decorous to put the question.

Denis, however, felt the peculiar delicacy of his situation, and looked at the priest, whilst the latter, under a momentary embarrassment, looked significantly at Denis. His reverence, however, was seldom at a loss

"What would *you* take him to be worth, Mike?" he asked; "remember he's but badly trained, and I'm sure it will cost me both money and trouble to make anything dacent out of him."

"If you got him somewhere between five-and-twenty and thirty guineas, I would say you have good value for your money, plase your reverence. What do *you* say, Denis—am I near it?"

"Why, Mike, you know as much about a horse as you do about the Pentateuch or Paralipomenon. Five-and-twenty guineas, indeed! I hope you won't set your grass as you would sell your horses."

"Why, thin, if your reverence *ped* ready money for him, I maintain he was as well worth twenty guineas as a thief's worth the gallows; an' you know, sir, I'd be long sorry to differ wid you. Am I near it now, docthor?"

"Denis got for the horse more than that," said his reverence, "and he may speak for himself."

"Thrue for you, sir," replied Denis: "I surely got above twenty guineas for him, an' I'm well satisfied wid the bargain."

"You hear that now, Mike—you hear what he says."

"There's no goin' beyant it," returned Mike; "the proof o' the puddin' is in the atin', as we'll soon know, Mave—eh, docthor?"

"I never knew Mave to make a bad one," said the priest, "except upon the day Friar Hennessy dined with me here—my curate was sick, and I had to call in the Friar to assist me at confession; however, to do Mave justice, it was *not* her fault, for the Friar drowned the pudding, which was originally a good one, with a deluge of strong whisky.

"'It's too gross,' said the facetious Friar, in his loud, strong voice—'it's too gross, Docthor Finnerty, so let us *spiritualise* it, that it may be Christian atin', fit for pious men to digest,' and then he came out with his thundering laugh—oigh, oigh, oigh, oigh! but he had consequently the most of the pudding to himself, an', indeed, brought the better half of it home in his saddle-bags."

"Faix, an' he did," said Mave, "an' a fat goose that he coaxed Mary to kill for him unknownst to us all in the coorse o' the day."

"How long is he dead, docthor!" said Denis; "God rest him, anyway, he's happy!"

"He died in the hot summer, now nine years about June last; and talking about him reminds me of a trick he put on me about two years before his death. He and I had not been on good terms for long enough before that time; but as the curate I had was then sickly, and as I wouldn't be allowed two, I thought it might be convenient to call in the friar occasionally, a regulation he did not at all relish, for he said he could make far more by *questing* and poaching about among the old women of the parish, with whom he was a great favourite, in consequence of the Latin hymns he used to sing for them, and the great cures he used to perform—a species of devotion which neither I nor my curate had time to practise. So, in order to renew my intimacy, I sent him a bag of oatmeal and a couple of flitches of bacon, both of which he readily accepted, and came down to me on the following day to borrow three guineas. After attempting to evade him

—for, in fact, I had not the money *to spare*—he at length succeeded in getting them from me, on the condition that he was to give my horse a month's grass by way of compensation, for I knew that to expect payment from him was next to going for piety to a parson.

"'I will,' said he, 'give your horse the run of my best field'—for he held a comfortable bit of ground; 'but,' he added, 'as you have been always cutting at me about my principle, I must insist, if it was only to convince you of my generosity, that you'll lave the choosing of the month to myself.'

"As I really wanted an assistant at the time, he had me bound, in some degree, to his own will. I accordingly gave him the money; but from that till the day of his death he never sent for my horse, except when there was a foot and a half of snow on the ground, at which time he was certain to despatch a messenger for him, 'with Father Hennessy's compliments, and he requested Doctor Finnerty to send his horse to Father Hennessy's field to ate his month's grass.'"

"But is it true, docthor, that his face was shinin' after his death?"

"True enough, and, to my own knowledge, long *before* that event."

"Dear me," exclaimed Mave, "he was a holy man, afther all!"

"Undoubtedly he was," said the priest; "there are spots in the sun, Mrs. O'Shaughnessy—we are not all immaculate. There never was one sent into this world without less or more sin upon them. Even the saints themselves had venial touches about them, but nothing to signify."

"Docthor," said the uncle, pertinaciously adhering to the original question, "you have an opportunity of knowin' what a good parish might be worth to a smart, active priest. For the sake of a son of mine that I've some notion of ——"

"By-the-by, I wonder Denis is not here before now," exclaimed his reverence, lending a deaf ear to Mike O'Shaughnessy's interrogatory.

Old Denis's favourite topic had been started, and he accordingly launched out upon it with all the delight and ardour of a fond father.

"Now, docthor dear, before us all—an' sure you know as well as I do that we're all friends together—what's your downright opinion of Denis? Is he as bright as you tould me the other mornin' he was?"

"Really, Denis O'Shaughnessy," replied his reverence, "it's not pleasant to me to be pressed so often to eulogise a young gintleman of whose talents I have so frequently expressed my opinion. Is not once sufficient for *me* to say what I've said concerning him? But, as we *are* all present, I now say and declare that my opinion of Denis O'Shaughnessy, jun., is decidedly *peculiar*—decidedly. Come, girshah, keep basting the mutton, and never heed my boots—turn it about and baste the back of it better."

"God be thanked," exclaimed the delighted father, "sure it's a comfort to hear *that*, anyhow—afther all the pains and throuble we've taken wid him, to know it's not lost. Why, that boy was so smart, docthor, that, may I never sin, when he went first to the Latin, but—an' this is no lie, for I have it from his own lips—when he'd look upon his task two or three times over night, he'd waken wid every word of it

pat off the book, the next mornin'. And how do you think he got it? Why, the crathur, you see, used to dhrame that he was readin' it off, and so he used to get it that way in his sleep."

At this moment Darby Moran, Denis's old foe, entered, and his reception was cordial and, if the truth were known, almost magnanimous on the part of Denis.

"Darby Moran," said he, "not a man, barrin' his reverence here, in the parish we sit in, that I'm prouder to see on my flure—give me your hand, man alive, and Mave and all of yees welcome him. Everything of what you know is buried between us, and you're bound to welcome him, if it was only in regard of the handsome way he spoke of our son this day—here's my own chair, Darby, and sit down."

"Throth," said Darby, after shaking hands with the priest and greeting the rest of the company, "the same boy no one could spake ill of; and although we and his people were not upon the best footin', still the sarra one o' me but always gave *him* his due."

"Indeed, I believe you, Darby," said his father; "but are you comfortable? Draw your chair nearer the fire—the evenin's gettin' cowld."

"I'm very well, Denis, I thank you; nearer the fire! Faix, except you want to have me roasted along wid that shoulder of mutton and goose, I think I can't go much nearer it."

"I'm sorry you warn't in sooner, Darby, till you'd hear what Docthor Finnerty here—God spare him long among us—said of Denis awhile ago. Docthor, if it wouldn't be makin' too free, maybe you'd oblage me wid repatin' it over again?"

"I can never have any hesitation," replied the priest, "in repeating anything to his advantage—I stated, Darby, that young Misther O'Shaughnessy was a youth of whom my opinion was decidedly *peculiar*—keep basting, child, you're forgetting the goose now; did you never see a priest's boots before?"

"An' nobody has a better right to know nor yourself, wherever larnin' and education's consarned," said the father.

"Why, it's not long since I examined him myself; I say it sitting here, and I believe everyone that hears me is present; and during the course of the examination I was really astonished. The translations, and derivations, and conjugations, and ratiocinations, and variations, and investigations that he gave were all the most remarkably original I ever heard. He would not be contented with the common sense of a passage, but he'd keep hunting, and hawking, and fishing about for something that was out of the ordinary course of reading, that I was truly struck with his eccentric turn of genius."

"You think he'll pass the bishop wid great credit, docthor?"

"I'll tell you what I think, Denis—which is going further than I went yet—I think that if *he* were the bishop, and the *bishop* the candidate for Maynooth, that his lordship would have but a poor chance of passing. There's the pinnacle of my eulogium upon him; and now to give my opinion on another important subject: I pronounce the goose and mutton done to a turn. As it appears that Mrs. O'Shaughnessy

has every other portion of the dinner ready, I move that we commence operations as soon as possible."

"But Denis, docthor? it would be a pleasure to me to have him, poor fellow, wid *all* his throuble over, and his mind at ase; maybe if we wait a weeshy while longer, docthor, that he'll come, and you know Father Molony, too, is to come yet, and some more of our friends."

"If the examination was a long one, I tell you that Misther O'Shaughnessy may not be here this hour to come; and you may be sure the bishop, meeting such a bright boy, wouldn't make it a short one. As for Father Molony, he'll be here time enough, so I move again that we attack the citadel."

"Well, well, never say it again—the sarra one o' me will keep it back, myself bein' as ripe as any of you, barrin' his reverence, that we're not to take the foreway of in anything. Ha! ha! ha!"

Whilst Mave and her daughters were engaged in laying dinner, and in making all other arrangements necessary for their comfort, the priest took Denis aside, and thus addressed him:—

"Denis, I need scarcely remark that this meeting of our friends is upon no common occasion; that it's neither a wedding, nor a station, nor a christening, but a gathering of relations for a more honourable purpose than any of them, excepting the station, which you know is a *religious rite*. I just mention this privately, lest you might not be properly on your guard, and to prevent any appearance of manœuvres; or—in short, I hope you have abundance of everything; I hope you have, and that not for your own sake so much as for that of your son. Remember your boy, and what he's designed for, and don't let the dinner or its concomitants be discreditable to *him*; for, in fact, it's his dinner, observe, and not yours."

"I'm thankful, I'm deeply thankful, an' for ever oblaged to your reverence for your kindness: although, widout at all makin' little of it, it wasn't wanted here; never fear, docthor, there'll be lashins and lavins."

"Well, but make that clear, Denis; here now are near two dozen of us, and you say there are more to come, and all the provision I see for them is a shoulder of mutton, a goose, and something in that large pot on the fire, which I suppose is hung beef."

"Thrue for you, sir, but you don't know that we've got a tarin' fire down in the barn, where there's two geese more and two shouldhers of mutton to help what you seen—not to mintion a great big puddin', an' lots of other things. Sure you might notice Mave and the girls runnin' in an' out to attind the cookin' of it."

"Enough, Denis, that's sufficient; and now, between you and me, I say your son will be the loadstar of Maynooth, which out-tops anything I said of him yet."

"There's a whole keg of whisky, docthor."

"I see nothing to prevent him from being a bishop; indeed, it's almost certain, for he can't be kept back."

"I only hope your reverence will be livin' when he praches his first

sarmon. I have the dam of the coult still, an' a wink's as good as a nod, please your reverence."

"A strong letter in his favour to the President of Maynooth will do him no harm," said the priest.

They then joined their other friends, and in a few minutes an excellent dinner, plain and abundant, was spread out upon the table. It consisted of the usual materials which constitute an Irish feast in the house of a wealthy farmer, whose pride it is to compel every guest to eat so long as he can swallow a morsel. There were geese and fowl of all kinds—shoulders of mutton, laughing-potatoes, carrots, parsnips, and cabbage, together with an immense pudding, boiled in a clean sheet, and ingeniously kept together with long straws[1] drawn through it in all directions. A lord or duke might be senseless enough to look upon such a substantial, yeoman-like meal with a sneer; but with all their wealth and elegance, perhaps they may envy the health and appetite of those who partook of it. When Father Finnerty had given a short grace, and the operations of the table were commenced, Denis looked round him with a disappointed air, and exclaimed:

"Father Finnerty, there's only one thing, indeed, I may say two a-wantin' to complete our happiness—I mean Denis and Father Molony. What on earth does your reverence think can keep them?"

To this he received not a syllable of reply, nor did he consider it necessary to urge the question any further at present. Father Finnerty's powers of conversation seemed to have abandoned him; for although there were some few expressions loosely dropped, yet the worthy priest maintained an obstinate silence.

At length, in due time, he began to let fall an occasional remark, impeded considerably by hiccups, and an odd *Deo Gratias* or *Laus Deo*, uttered in that indecisive manner which indicates the position of a man who debates within himself whether he ought to rest satisfied or not.

At this moment the trampling of a horse was heard approaching the door, and immediately every one of Denis's family ran out to ascertain whether it was the young candidate. Loud and clamorous was their joy on finding that they were not mistaken; he was alone, and on arriving at the door dismounted slowly, and received their welcomes and congratulations with a philosophy which perplexed them not a little. The scene of confusion which followed his entrance into the house could scarcely be conceived: every hand was thrust out to welcome him, and every tongue loud in wishing him joy and happiness. The chairs and stools were overturned as they stood in the way of those who wished to approach him; plates fell in the bustle, and wooden trenchers trundled along the ground; the dogs, on mingling with the crowd that surrounded him, were kicked angrily from among them by those who had not yet got shaking hands with Denis. Father Finnerty, during this commotion, kept his seat in the most dignified

[1] This, about thirty years ago, was usual at weddings and other feasts, where everything went upon a large scale.

manner; but the moment it had subsided, he stretched out his hand to Denis, exclaiming:

"Mr. O'Shaughnessy, I congratulate you upon the event of this auspicious day! I wish you joy and happiness!"

"So do we all, over and over agin!" they exclaimed; "a proud gintleman he may be this night!"

"I thank you, Father Finnerty," said Denis, "and I thank you all!"

"Denis avourneen," said his mother, "sit down an' ate a hearty dinner; you must be both tired and hungry, so sit down, avick, and when you're done you can tell us all."

"*Bonum concilium, mi chare Dionysi*—the advice is good, Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, and I myself will, in honour of this day, although I have already dined, just take another slice;" and as he spoke he helped himself. "Anything to honour a friend," he continued; "but, by-the-by, before I commence I will try your own prescription, Denis—a whetter of this poteen at intervals. Hoch, that's glorious stuff—pure as any one of the cardinal virtues, and strong as fortitude, which is the champion of them all."

Denis, during these pleasant observations of the priest, sat silent, with a countenance pale and apparently dejected. When his mother had filled his plate, he gently put it away from him; but poured out a little spirits and water, which he drank.

"I cannot eat a morsel," said he; "mother, don't press me, it's impossible. We are all assembled here—friends, neighbours, and relations—I'll not disguise the fact—but the truth is I have been badly treated this day. I have been, in the most barefaced manner, rejected by the bishop, and a nephew of Father Molony elected in my place."

The effect which this disclosure produced upon the company present, especially upon his own family, utterly defies description. His father hastily laid down his glass, and his eyes opened to the utmost stretch of their lids; his mother let a plate fall which she was in the act of handing to one of her daughters, who was about to help a poor beggar at the door; all convivial enjoyment was suspended; the priest laid down his knife and fork, and fixed his large eyes upon Denis, with his mouth full; his young sister, Susan, flew over to his side, and looked intensely into his countenance for an explanation of what he meant, for she had not properly understood.

"Rejected!" exclaimed the priest—"rejected! Young man, I am your spiritual superior, and I command you, on this occasion, to practise no jocularity whatsoever—I lay it upon you as a religious duty to be serious and candid, to speak truth, and inform us at once whether what you have advanced be true or not?"

"I wish," said Denis, "that it was only jocularity on my part; but I solemnly assure you all that it is not. The bishop told me that I suffered myself to be misled as to my qualifications for entrance: he says it will take a year and a half's hard study to enable me to matriculate with a good grace. I told him that your reverence examined

me, and said I was well prepared ; and he said to me in reply that your reverence was very little of a judge as to my fitness."

"Very well," said the priest, "I thank his lordship ; 'tis true I deserved that from *him ;* but it can't be helped. I see, at all events, how the land lies. Denis O'Shaughnessy, I pronounce you to be, in the first place, an extremely stultified and indiscreet young man ; and in the next place, as badly treated and as oppressed a candidate for Maynooth as ever entered it. I pronounce you, in the face of the world, right well prepared for it ; but I see now who is the spy of the diocese—oh, oh, thank you, Misther Molony—I now remimber that he is related to his lordship through the beggarly clan of the M——s. But wait a little ; if I have failed here, thank heaven I have interest in the next diocese, the bishop of which is my cousin, and we will yet have a tug for it."

The mother and sisters of Denis were now drowned in tears ; and the grief of his sister Susan was absolutely hysterical. Old Denis's brow became pale and sorrowful, his eye sunk, and his hand trembled. His friends all partook of this serious disappointment, and sat in silence and embarrassment around the table. Young Denis's distress was truly intense : he could not eat a morsel ; his voice was tremulous with vexation ; and, indeed, altogether the aspect of those present betokened the occurrence of some grievous affliction.

"Well," said Brian, Denis's elder brother, "I only say this, that it's a good story for him to tell that he is a bishop, otherwise I'd think no more of puttin' a bullet through him from behind a hedge than I would of shootin' a cur dog."

"Don't say that, Brian," said his mother ; "bad as it is, he's one of our clargy, so don't spake disrespectful of him ; sure a year is not much to wait, an' the next time you go before him it won't be in his power to keep you back. As for Father Molony, we wish him well, but undher the roof of this house, at a station, or anything else of the kind, he will never sit, barrin' I thought he was either dhry or hungry, that I wouldn't bring evil upon my substance by refusin' him."

"And that was his lordship's character of me?" inquired the priest once more with chagrin.

"If that was not, perhaps you will find it in this letter," replied Denis, handing him a written communication from the bishop. Father Finnerty hastily broke open the seal, and read silently as follows :—

"*To the Rev. Father Finnerty, peace and benediction.*

"REV. SIR,—I feel deep indignation at hearing the disclosure made to me this day by the bearer, touching your negotiation with him and his family concerning a horse, as the value paid by them to you for procuring the use of my influence in his favour ; and I cannot sufficiently reprobate such a transaction, nor find terms strong enough in which to condemn the parties concerned in it. Sir, I repeat it that such juggling is more reprehensible on your part than on theirs, and that it is doubly disrespectful to me to suppose that I could be influenced by anything but merit in the candidates. I desire you will wait upon me to-morrow, when I hope you may be able to place the transaction in such a light as will raise

you once more to the estimation in which I have always held you. There are three other candidates, one of whom is a relation of your excellent curate's; but I have as yet made *no* decision, so that the appointment is still open. In the meantime, I command you to send back the horse to his proper owner, as soon after the receipt of this as possible, for O'Shaughnessy must not be shackled by any such stipulations. I have now to ask your Christian forgiveness for having, under the influence of temporary anger, spoken of you before this lad with disrespect. I hereby make restitution, and beg that you will remember me by name in your prayers, as I shall also name you in mine.

"I am, &c., + JAMES M."

When Father Finnerty read this letter, his countenance gradually assumed an expression of the most irresistible humour; nothing could be more truly comic than the significant look he directed at each individual of the O'Shaughnessys, not omitting even the little girl who had basted the goose, whom he patted on the head with that mechanical abstraction resulting from the occurrence of something highly agreeable. The cast of his features was now the more ludicrous, when contrasted with the rueful visage he presented on hearing the manner in which his character had been delineated by the bishop. At length he laid himself back in his chair, and putting his hands to his sides, fairly laughed out loudly for near five minutes.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, "Dionysius, Dionysius, but you are the simple and unsophisticated youth! Oh, you *bocaun* of the wide earth, to come home with a long face upon you, telling us you were rejected, and you *not* rejected."

"Not rejected!—not rejecet!—not rejeckset!—not raxjaxet!" they all exclaimed, attempting to pronounce the word as well as they could.

"For the sake of heaven above us, docthor, don't keep us in doubt one minute longer," said old Denis.

"Follow me," said the priest, becoming instantly grave, "follow me, Dionysius; follow me, Denis More, and Brian, all follow—follow *me*. *I* have news for you! My friends, we'll be back instantly."

They accordingly passed into another room, where they remained in close conference for about a quarter of an hour, after which they re-entered in the highest spirits.

"Come," said Denis, "Pether, go over, abouchal, to Andy Bradagh's for Larry Cassidy the piper; fly like a swallow, Pether, an' don't come widout him. Mave, achora, all's right. Susy, you darlin', dhry your eyes, avourneen, all's right. Nabours, friends—fill, fill—I say all's right still. My son's not disgraced, nor he won't be disgraced whilst I have a house over my head or a beast in my stable. Docthor, reverend docthor, dhrink: may I never sin, but you must get merry, an' dance a '*cut-along*' wid myself, when the music comes, and you must thrip the 'priest in his boots' wid Susy here afther. Excuse me, nabours — docthor, you won't blame me, there's both joy and sorrow in these tears. I have had a good family of childhre, an' a faithful wife; an' Mave, achora, although time has laid his mark upon you as well as upon myself, and the locks are grey that wor once as black as a raven: yet, Mave, I seen the day, an' there's many livin' to prove it—ay, Mave, I seen the day when you wor worth lookin' at—

the wild rose of Lisbuie she was called, docthor. Well, Mave, I hope that my eyes may be closed by the hands I loved an' love so well—an' that's your own, agrah machree, an' Denis's."

"Whisht, Denis asthore," said Mave, wiping her eyes, "I hope I'll never see that day. Afther seein' Denis here what we all hope him to be, the next thing I wish is that I may never live to see my husband taken away from me, acushla; no, I hope God will take me to himself before *that* comes."

There is something touching in the burst of pathetic affection which springs strongly from the heart of a worthy couple, when, seated among their own family, the feelings of the husband and the father, the wife and the mother, overpower them. In this case the feeling is always deep in proportion to the strength and purity of domestic affection; still it is checked by the melancholy satisfaction that our place is to be filled by those who are dear to us.

"But now," said the priest, "that the scent lies still warm, let me ask you, Dionysius, how the bishop came to understand the *compactum?*"

"I really cannot undertake to say," replied Denis; "but if any man has on eye like a *basileus*, he has. On finding, sir, that there was some defect in my responsive powers, he looked keenly at me, closing his piercing eyes a little, and inquired upon what ground I had presented myself as a candidate. I would have sunk the *compactum* altogether, but for the eye. I suspended and hesitated a little, but at length told him that there was an understanding—a—a—kind of—in short, he squeezed the whole secret out o' me gradationally. You know the result!"

"Ah, Dionysius, you are yet an unfledged bird; but it matters little. All will be rectified soon."

"Arrah, Dinis," inquired his mother, "was it only takin' a rise out of us you wor all the time? Throth, myself's not the betther of the fright you put me into."

"No," replied Denis, "the bishop treated me harshly I thought: he said I was not properly fit. 'You might pass,' said he, 'upon a particular occasion, or under peculiar circumstances; but it will take at least a year and a half's study to enable you to enter Maynooth as I would wish you. You may go home again,' said he; 'at present I have dismissed the subject.'

"After this, on meeting Father Molony, he told me that his cousin had passed, and that he would be soon sent up to Maynooth: so I concluded all hope was over with me; but I didn't then know what the letter to Father Finnerty contained. I now see that I may succeed still."

"You may and *shall*, Denis; but no thanks to Father Molony for that: however, I shall keep my eye upon the same curate, never fear. Well, let that pass, and now for harmony, conviviality, and friendship. Gentlemen, fill your glasses—I mean your respective vessels. Come, Denis More, let that porringer of yours be a brimmer. Ned Hanratty, charge your noggin. Darby, although your mug wants an ear, it can

hold *the full* of it. Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, that old family cruiskeen ought to be with your husband: but no matther—*non constat.—Eh t Dionysi? Intelligisne?*"

"*Intelligo, domine.*"

"Here, then, is health, success, and prosperity to Mr. Dionysius O'Shaughnessy, jun.! May he soon be on the retreat in the vivacious walls of that learned and sprightly seminary, Maynooth! On the retreat, I say, getting fat upon half a meal a day for the first week, fasting tightly against the grain, praying sincerely for a set in at the king's mutton, and repenting thoroughly of his penitence!"

"Well, docthor, that is a toast. Denis, have you nothing to say to that? Won't you stand up an' thank his reverence, anyhow?"

"I am really too much oppressed with relaxation," said Denis, "to return thanks in that florid style which would become my pretensions. I cannot, however, but thank Father Finnerty for his ingenious and learned toast, which does equal honour to his *head* and heart, and I might superadd, to his *intellects* also; for in drinking toasts, my friends, I always elaborate a distinction between strength of head and strength of intellect. I now thank you all for having in so liberal a manner drunk my health; and in grateful return I request you will once more fill your utensils, and learnedly drink—long life and a mitre to the Reverend Father Finnerty, of the Society of St. Dominick, Doctor of Divinity and Parochial Priest of this excellent parish!—*Propino tibi salutem, Doctor doctissime, reverendissime, et sanctissime; nec non omnibus amicis hic congregatis!*"

The priest's eye, during this speech, twinkled with humour: he saw clearly that Denis thoroughly understood the raillery of his toast, and that the compliment was well repaid. On this subject he did not wish, however, to proceed further, and his object now was that the evening should pass off as agreeably as possible.

Next morning Father Finnerty paid Denis a timely visit, having first, as he had been directed, sent home the colt a little after day-break. They then took an early breakfast, and after about half an hour's further deliberation, the priest, old Denis, and his son—the last mounted upon the redoubtable colt—proceeded to the bishop's residence. His lordship had nearly finished breakfast, which he took in his study; but as he was engaged with his brother, the barrister, who slept at his house the night before, in order to attend a public meeting on that day, he could not be seen for some time after they arrived. At length they were admitted. The Right Reverend Doctor was still seated at the breakfast table, dressed in a morning gown of fine black stuff, such as the brothers of the Franciscan order of monks usually wear, to which order he belonged. He wore black silk stockings, gold knee-buckles to his small-clothes, a rich ruby ring upon his finger, and a small gold cross, set with brilliants, about his neck. This last was not usually visible; but as he had not yet dressed for the day, it hung over his vest. He sat or rather lolled back in a stuffed easy chair, one leg thrown indolently over the other. Though not an old man, he wore powder, which gave him an air of

greater reverence ; and as his features were sharp and intelligent, his eye small but keen, and his manner altogether impressive and gentlemanly, if not dignified, it was not surprising that Father Finnerty's two companions felt awed and embarrassed before him. Nor was the priest himself wholly free from that humbling sensation which one naturally feels when in the presence of a superior mind in a superior station of life.

"Good morning to your lordship," said the priest, "I am exceedingly happy to see you look so well. Counsellor, your most obedient: I hope, sir, you are in good health !"

To this both gentlemen replied in the usual commonplace terms.

"Docthor," continued the priest, "this is a worthy dacent parishioner of mine, Denis O'Shaughnessy ; and this is his son, who has the honour to be already known to your lordship."

"Sit down, O'Shaughnessy," said the bishop, "take a seat, young man."

"I humbly thank your lordship," replied Denis the elder, taking a chair as he spoke, and laying his hat beside him on the carpet.

The son, who trembled at the moment from head to foot, did not sit as he was asked, but the father, after giving him a pluck, said in a whisper, "Can't you sit when his lordship bids you?" He then took a seat, but appeared scarcely to know whether he sat or stood.

"By-the-by, doctor, you have improved this place mightily," continued Father Finnerty, "since I had the pleasure of being here last. I thought I saw a green-house peeping over the garden-wall."

"Yes," replied the bishop, "I am just beginning to make a collection of shrubs and flowers upon a small scale. I believe you are aware that tending and rearing flowers, Mr. Finnerty, is a favourite amusement with me."

"I believe I have a good right to know as much, Dr. M——," replied Mr. Finnerty. "If I don't mistake, I sent you some specimens for your garden that were not contemptible. And if I don't mistake again, I shall be able to send your lordship a shrub that would take the pearl off a man's eye only to look at it. And what's more, it's quite a new comer ; not two years in the country."

"Pray how is it called, Mr. Finnerty?"

"Upon my credit, doctor, with great respect, I will tell you nothing more about it at present. If you wish to see it, or to know its name, or to get a slip of it, you must first come and eat a dinner with me. And, counsellor, if you, too, could appear on your own behalf, so much the better."

"I fear I cannot, Mr. Finnerty, but I daresay my brother will do himself the pleasure of dining with you"

"It cannot be for at least six weeks, Mr. Finnerty," said the bishop. "You forget that the Confirmations begin in ten days ; but I shall have the pleasure of dining with you when I come to confirm in your parish."

"Phoo ! Why, doctor, that's a matter of course. Couldn't your lordship make it convenient to come during the week, and bring the

counsellor here with you? Don't say no, counsellor: I'll have no demurring."

"Mr. Finnerty," said the bishop, "it is impossible at present. My brother goes to Dublin to-morrow, and I must go on the following day to attend the consecration of a chapel in the metropolis."

"Then upon my credit, your lordship will get neither the name nor description of my *Fucia*, until you earn it by eating a dinner, and drinking a glass of claret with the Rev. Father Finnerty. Are those hard terms, counsellor?—Ha! ha! ha? I'm not the man to be put off a thing, I assure you."

"Mr. Finnerty," said the bishop, smiling at but not noticing the worthy priest's blunder about the Fucia, "if possible, I shall dine with you soon! but at present it is out of my power to appoint a day."

"Well, well, doctor, make your own time of it; and now for the purport of our journey. Denis O'Shaughnessy here, my lord, is a warm, respectable parishioner of mine—a man, indeed, for whom I have great regard — he is reported to have inherited from his worthy father, two horns filled with guineas. His grandmother, as he could well inform your lordship, was born with a *lucky caul* upon her, which caul is still in the family. Isn't it so, Denis?"

"My lord, in dignity, it's thruth," replied Denis, "and from the time it came into the family they always thruv, thanks be to goodness!"

The lawyer sat eyeing the priest and Denis alternately, evidently puzzled to comprehend what such a remarkable introduction could lead to.

The bishop seemed not to be surprised, for his features betrayed no change whatsoever.

"Having, therefore, had the necessary means of educating a son for the Church, he has accordingly prepared this young man with much anxiety and expense for Maynooth."

"Plase your lordship," said Denis, "Docthor Finnerty is clothin' it betther than I could do. My heart is fixed upon seein' him what we all expect him to be, your lordship."

"Mr. Finnerty," observed the bishop, "you seem to be intimately acquainted with O'Shaughnessy's circumstances; you appear to take a warm interest in the family, particularly in the success of his son."

"Undoubtedly, my lord; I am particularly anxious for his success."

"You received my letter yesterday?"

"I am here to-day, my lord, in consequence of having received it. But, by-the-by, there was, under favour, a slight misconception on the part of your ——"

"What misconception, sir?"

"Why, my lord—counsellor, this is a—a—kind of charge his lordship is bringing against me, under a slight misconception. My lord, the fact is, that I didn't see what ecclesiastical right I had to prevent Denis here from disposing of his own property to ——"

"I expect an apology from you, Mr. Finnerty, but neither a defence nor a justification. An attempt at either will not advance the interests of your young friend, believe me."

"Then I have only to say that the wish expressed in your lordship's letter has been complied with. But wait awhile, my lord," continued the priest, good humouredly, "I shall soon turn the tables on yourself."

"How is that, pray?"

"Why, my lord, the horse is in your stable, and Denis declares he will not take him out of it."

"I have not the slightest objection to that," replied the bishop, "upon the express condition that his son shall never enter Maynooth."

"For my part," observed Mr. Finnerty, "I leave the matter now between your lordship and O'Shaughnessy himself. You may act as you please, doctor, and so may he."

"Mr. Finnerty, if I could suppose for a moment that the suggestion of thus influencing me originated with *you*, I would instantly deprive you of your parish, and make you assistant to your excellent curate, for whom I entertain a sincere regard. I have already expressed my opinion of the transaction alluded to in my letter. You have frequently offended me, Mr. Finnerty, by presuming too far upon my good temper, and by relying probably upon your own jocular disposition. Take care, sir, that you don't break down in some of your best jokes. I fear that, under the guise of humour, you frequently avail yourself of the weakness, or ignorance, or simplicity, of your parishioners. I hope, Mr. Finnerty, that while *you* laugh at the jest, *they* don't pay for it."

The priest here caught the counsellor's eye, and gave him a dry wink, not unperceived, however, by the bishop, who could scarcely repress a smile.

"You should have known me better, Mr. Finnerty, than to suppose that any motive could influence me in deciding upon the claims of candidates for Maynooth besides their own moral character and literary acquirements. So long as I live, this, and this alone, will be the rule of my conduct, touching persons in the circumstances of young O'Shaughnessy."

"My gracious lord," said Denis, "don't be angry wid Misther Finnerty. I'll bear it all, for it was my fau't. The horse is mine, and say what you will, out of your stable I'll never bring him. I think, wid great sibmission, a man may do what he pleases wid his own."

"Certainly," said the bishop; "my consent to permit your son to go to Maynooth is my own. Now this consent I will not give if you press that mode of argument upon me."

"My reverend lord, as heaven's above me, I'd give all I'm worth to see the boy in Maynooth. If he doesn't go, afther all our hopes, I'd break my heart." He was so deeply affected that the large tears rolled down his cheeks as he spoke.

"Will your lordship *buy* the horse!" he added; "I don't want him, and you, maybe, do?"

"I do *not* want him," said the bishop; "and if I did, I would not, under the present circumstances, purchase him from you."

"Then my boy won't get in, your lordship? And you'll neither buy the horse nor take him as a present. My curse upon him for a horse! The first thing I'll do when I get home will be to put a bullet through him, for he has been an unlucky thief to us. Is my son aquil to the others that came to pass your lordship?" asked Denis.

"There is none among them properly qualified," said the bishop. "If there be any superiority among them, your son has it. He is not without natural talent, Mr. Finnerty; his translations are strong and fluent, but ridiculously pedantic. That, however, is perhaps less his fault than the fault of those who instructed him."

"Are you anxious to dispose of the horse?" said the counsellor.

"A single day, sir, he'll never pass in my stable," said Denis; "he's been an unlucky baste to me an' mine, an' to all that had anything to do wid him."

"Pray what age is he?"

"Risin' four, sir; 'deed I believe he's four all out, an' a purty devil's clip he is as you'd wish to see."

"Come," said the counsellor, rising, "let's have a look at him. Mr. Finnerty, you're an excellent judge, will you favour me with your opinion?"

The priest and he, accompanied by the two O'Shaughnessys, passed out to the stable-yard where their horses stood. As they went, Father Finnerty whispered to O'Shaughnessy—

"Now, Denis, is your time. Strike while the iron is hot! Don't take a penny!—don't take a fraction! Get into a passion, and swear you'll shoot him unless he accepts him as a present. If he does, all's right; he can twine the bishop round his finger."

"I see, sir," said Denis, "I see! Let me alone for managin' him."

The barrister was already engaged in examining the horse's mouth, as is usual, when the priest accosted him with—

"You are transgressing etiquette in this instance, counsellor. You know the proverb—'Never look a gift horse in the mouth.'"

"How, Mr. Finnerty?—a gift horse!"

"His reverence is right!" exclaimed Denis; "the sorra penny ever will cross my pocket for the same horse. You must take him as he stands, sir, barrin' the bridle and saddle; that's not my own."

"He will take no money," said the priest.

"Nonsense, my dear sir! Why not take a fair price for him?"

"Divil the penny will cross my pocket for him, the unlucky thief?" replied the shrewd farmer.

"Then in that case the negotiation is ended," replied the barrister. "I certainly will not accept him as a present. Why should I? What claim have I on Mr. O'Shaughnessy!"

"I don't want you to take him," said Denis; "I want nobody to take him: but I know the dogs of the parish 'll be pickin' his bones afore night. You may as well have him, sir, as not."

"Is the man serious, Mr. Finnerty?"

"I never saw a man in my life having a more serious appearance, I assure you," said the priest.

"By Jove, it's a queer business," replied the other; "a most extra ordinary affair as I ever witnessed! Why, it would be madness to destroy such a fine animal as that! The horse is an excellent one! However, I shall certainly *not* accept him until I ascertain whether I can prevail upon the bishop to elect his son to this vacancy. If I can make the man no return for him, I shall let him go to the dogs."

"Go up and set to work," said the priest; "but remember that *tace* is Latin for a candle. Keep his lordship in the dark, otherwise the scion is ousted."

"True," said the other. "In the meantime, bring them into the parlour until I try what can be done."

"Take the bishop upon the father's affection for him," said the priest.

"You are right. I am glad you mentioned it."

"The poor man will break his heart," said the priest.

"He will," responded the counsellor, smiling.

"So will the mother, too," said the priest, with an arch look.

"And the whole family," replied the counsellor.

"Go up instantly," said the priest; "you have often got a worse fee."

"And perhaps with less prospect of success," said the other. "Gentlemen, have the goodness to walk into the parlour for a few minutes, while I endeavour to soften my brother a little, if I can, upon this untoward business."

When the priest and his two friends entered the parlour, which was elegantly furnished, they stood for a moment to survey it. Old Denis, however, was too much engaged in the subject which lay nearest his heart to take pleasure in anything else; at least, until he should hear the priest's opinion upon the posture of affairs.

"What does your reverence think?" said Denis.

"Behave yourself," replied the pastor. "None of your nonsense! You know what I think as well as I do myself."

"But will Dionissis pass? Will he go to Maynooth?"

"Will you go to your dinner to-day, or to your bed to-night?"

"God be praised! Well, docthor, wait till we seen him off; then I'll be spakin' to you!"

"No," said the priest; "but wait till you take a toss upon this sofa, and then you will get a taste of ecclesiastical luxury."

"Ay," said Denis, "but would it be right o' me to sit in it? Maybe it's consecrated."

"Faith, you may swear that; but it is to the ease and comfort of his lordship! Come, man, sit down, till you see how you'll sink in it."

"Oh, murdher!" exclaimed Denis, "where am I at all? Docthor dear, am I in sight? Do you see the crown o' my head, good or bad? Oh, may I never sin, but that's great state!—Well to be sure!"

"Ay," said the priest, "see what it is to be a bishop in any Church!

The moment a man becomes a bishop, he fastens tooth and nail upon luxury, as if a mitre was a dispensation for enjoying the world that they have sworn to renounce. Dionysius, look about you! Isn't this worth studying for?"

"Yes," replied the hitherto silent candidate, "if it was perusal on the part of his lordship that got it."

"Upon my credit, a shrewd observation! Ah, Dionysius, merit is overlooked in every Church, and in every profession; or perhaps—hem!—ehem!—perhaps some of your reverend friends might be higher up! I mean nobody; but if sound learning, and wit, and humour, together with several other virtues which I decline enumerating, could secure a mitre, why mitres might be on other brows."

"This is surely great state," observed the candidate; "and if it be a thing that I matriculate ——"

"And yet," said the priest, interrupting him, "this same bishop—who is, no doubt, a worthy man, but who has no natural ear for a jest—was once upon a time the priest of an indifferent good parish, like myself; ay, and a poor, cowardly, culprit-looking candidate, ready to sink into the earth before his bishop, like you."

"Me cowardly!" said the candidate: "I decline the insinuation altogether. It was nothing but veneration and respect, which you know we should entertain for all our spiritual superiors."

"That's truth decidedly; though, at the same time, your nerves were certainly rather entangled, like a ravelled hank. But no matter, man; we have all felt the same in our time. Did you observe how I managed the bishop?"

"I can't say I did," replied the candidate, who felt hurt at the imputation of cowardice, before his father; "but I saw, sir, that the bishop managed you."

"Pray for a longer vision, Dionysius. I tell you that no other priest in the diocese could have got both you and me out of the dilemma in which we stood but myself. He has taken to the study of weeds and plants in his old days; and I, who have a natural taste for botany, know it is his weak side. I tell you, he would give the right of filling a vacancy in Maynooth any day in the year, for a rare plant or flower. So much for your knowledge of human nature. You'll grant I managed the counsellor?"

"Between my father and you, sir, things look well. We have not, however, got a certificate of success yet."

"*Patientia fit levior ferendo!*—Have patience, man. Wait till we see the counsellor."

He had scarcely uttered the last words when that gentleman entered.

"Well, counsellor," said the priest, "is it a hit?"

"Pray what is your Christian name, Mr. O'Shaughnessy?" inquired the lawyer of young Denis.

"My Christian name, sir," replied Denis, "is Di-o-ny-si-us O'Shaughnessy. That, sir, is the name by which I am always appellated."

"That's quite sufficient," said the other. "I shall be with you again in a few minutes."

"But won't you give us a hint, my good sir, as to how the land lies?" said the priest, as the lawyer left the room.

"Presently, Mr. Finnerty, presently."

"*Intelligisne, Dionisi?*"

"*Vix, Domini. Quid sentis?*"

"*Quid sentis!* No, but it was good fortune sent us. Don't you persave, Dionysius, and you, Denis—don't you know, I say, that this letter of admission couldn't be written except the bishop knew his name in full? Unlucky! Faith if ever a horse was lucky this is he."

"I declare, docthor," said the father, "I can neither sit nor stand, nor think of any one thing for a minute, I'm so much on the fidgets to know what the bishop 'ill say."

"I also," said Dionysius, "am in a state of evaporation and uncertainty touching the same point. However, this I can affirm with veracity, that if I am rejected, my mind is made up to pursue an antithetical course of life altogether. If he rejects me now, he will never reject me again."

"Musha, how—Denny—Dionissis, avick? What do you mane?" said the father.

"I will give," said the son, "what is designated a loose translation of my meaning to Mr. Finnerty here, if I find that I am excluded on this occasion."

"And if you *do* succeed," said the priest, "I would advise you to hire a loose translator during the remainder of your residence among us; for upon my veracity, Dionysius, the king's English will perform hard duty until you enter Maynooth. Not a word under six feet will be brought into the ranks—grenadiers every one of them, not to mention the thumpers you will coin."

"Come, Docthor Finnerty," said our candidate, pulling up a little, "if the base Latin which you put into circulation were compared with my English thumpers, it would be found that, of the two, I am more legitimate and etymological."

"I shall be happy to dispute that point with you another time," said the priest; "when we can —— Silence, here comes the counsellor."

"Mr. O'Shaughnessy," said the lawyer, addressing the candidate, "allow me to congratulate you on your success! Your business is accomplished. The bishop is just finishing a letter for you to the President of Maynooth. I assure you I feel great pleasure at your success."

"Accept my thanks, sir," said Denis, whose eye was instantly lit up with delight—"accept my most obsequious thanks to the very furthest extent of my gratitude."

The barrister then shook hands with old Denis. "O'Shaughnessy," said he, "I am very happy that I have had it in my power to serve you and your son."

"Counsellor," said Denis, seizing his hand in both his—"coun-

sellor, ahagur machree—counsellor, oh, what—what—can I say! Is he—is it possible—is it thruth that my boy is to go to Maynewth this time? Oh, if you knew, *but* knew, the heavy, dead weight you tuck off o' my heart! Our son not cast aside—not disgraced!—for what else would the people think it? The horse!—a poor bit of a coult—a poor unsignified animal! To the devil wid him! What is he compared to the joy an' delight of this minute! Take him, sir; take him—an' if he was worth his weight in goold, I vow to heaven above me I'd not think him too good. Too good!—no nor half good enough for you. God remimber this to you! an' he will, too. Little you know the happiness you have given us, counsellor! Little you know it. But no matther! An' you, too, Father Finnerty, helped to bring this about. But sure you were ever an' always our friend! Well, no matther—no matther! God will reward you both."

"My brother wishes to see Mr. Finnerty and your son," said the barrister; "I think they had better go up to him. He is anxious to get a slip of your shrub, Mr. Finnerty."

"Ah, I thought so," said the priest—"I thought as much."

The bishop, on their re-appearance, presented Denis with the long wished-for letter. He then gave him a suitable exhortation with reference to the serious and responsible duties for which he was about to prepare himself. After concluding his admonition, he addressed Father Finnerty as follows:

"Now, Mr. Finnerty, this matter has ended in a manner satisfactory, not only to your young friend, but to yourself. You must promise me that there shall be no more horse-dealing. I do not think jockeying of that description either creditable or just. I am unwilling to use harsher language, but I could not conscientiously let it pass without reproof. In the next place, will you let me have a slip of that flowering shrub you boast of."

"Doctor," said the priest, "is it possible you can ask it of me? Why, I think your lordship ought to know that's your own, as is every plant and flower in my garden that you fancy. Do you dine at home to-morrow, my lord?"

"I do," said the bishop.

"Well, then, I shall come up with a slip or two of it, and dine with you. I know the situation in which it grows best; and knowing this, I will put it down with my own hands. But I protest, my lord, against your allowing me to be traced in the business of the shrub at all, otherwise I shall have the whole county on my back."

"Be under no apprehension of that, Mr. Finnerty. I shall be happy if you dine with me, but bring it with you. How did you come to get it so early after its appearance in this country?"

"I got it from head-quarters, doctor—from one of the best botanists in the three kingdoms; certainly from the best Irish botanist living—my friend, Mr. Mackay, of the College Botanic Gardens. My lord, I wish you good morning; but before I go, accept my thanks for your kindness to my young friend. I assure you he will be a useful man; for he is even now no indifferent casuist."

"And I, my lord," said Denis, "return you my most grateful—hem—my most grateful—and—most supercilious thanks for the favour—the stupendous favour you have conferred upon me."

"God bless you, my dear child," returned the bishop; "but if you be advised by me, speak more intelligibly. Use plain words, and discard all difficult and pedantic expressions. God bless you! Farewell?"

On coming down, they found old Denis in the stable-yard in rather a ridiculous kind of harness. The saddle that had been on the colt was strapped about him with the bridle, for both had been borrowed from a neighbour.

"Dionissis an' I must both ride the same horse," said he, "an' as we have two saddles, I must carry one of them."

An altercation then ensued as to which should ride foremost. The son, now in high glee, insisted on the father's taking the seat of honour; but the father would not hear of this. The lad was, in his opinion, at least semi-clerical, and to ride behind would be a degradation to so learned a youth. They mounted at length, the son foremost, and the father on the crupper, the saddle strapped about him, with the stirrups dangling by the horse's flanks. Father Finnerty, who accompanied them, could not, however, on turning from the bishop's grounds into the highway, get a word out of them. The truth is, both their hearts were full; both were, therefore, silent, and thought every minute an hour until they reached home.

This was but natural. A man may conceal calamity or distress even from his dearest friends; for who is there who wishes to be thrust back from his acknowledged position in life? Or who, when he is thrust back, will not veil his misfortunes or his errors with the guise of indifference or simulation? In good fortune we act differently. It is a step advanced; an elevation gained; there is nothing to fear or to be ashamed of, and we are as strongly prompted by vanity to proclaim it to the world as we are by pride to ascribe its occurrence to our own talents or virtues. There are other and purer motives for this. The affections will not be still; they seek the hearts to which they tend; and having found them, the mutual interchange of *good* takes place. Father Finnerty—whose heart, though a kind one, had, probably, been too long out of practice to remember the influence and working of the domestic affections—could not comprehend the singular conduct of the two O'Shaughnessys.

"What the devil is the matter with you?" he inquired. "Have you lost the use of your speech?"

"Push an, avourneen," said the father to Denis—"push an; lay the spur to him. Isn't *your* spur on the right foot?"

"Most certainly," said Denis, now as pedantic as ever—"most certainly it is. You are not to be informed that our family spur is a right-foot spur."

"Well, then, Pether Gallagher's spur that I have an is a left-foot spur, for it's an my left foot."

"You are a bright pair," said the priest, somewhat nettled at their

neglect of him—"you are a bright pair, and deeply learned in spurs. Can't you ride asier?"

"Never heed him," said the father in a whisper; "do you give the mare the *right* spur, an' I'll give her the *left*. Push an! That's it."

They accordingly dashed forward, Denis plying one heel, and the father another, until the priest found himself gradually falling behind. In vain *he* plied *both* spurs; in vain he whipped, and wriggled on the saddle, and pressed forward his hack. Being a priest's horse, the animal had been accustomed for the last twelve years to a certain jog-trot pace, beyond which it neither would nor could go. On finding all his efforts to overtake them unsuccessful, he at last shouted after them:

"Do you call that gratitude, my worthy friends? To lave me creeping over the ups and downs of this villainous road without company?"

"Lay an, aroon," said the father. "Let us get home. Oh, how your poor mother will die wid joy, an' Susy, an' Nanny, an' Brian, an' Michael, an' Dick, an' Lanty, an' all o' them. Glory be to heaven! what a meetin' we'll have! An' the nabours, too! Push an, avick machree."

"My curse upon you, Friar Hennessy!" exclaimed the priest, in a soliloquy; "it was you who first taught this four-footed snail to go like a thief to the gallows. I wish to heaven you had palmed him on some one else, for many a dinner I have lost by him in my time. Is that your gratitude, gentlemen? Do I deserve this?"

"What is he sayin'?" said the father.

"He is declaiming about gratitude," replied Denis.

"Lay an her," said the father. "Poor Mave!"

"Such conduct does you credit," shouted the priest. "It's just the way of the world. You have got what you wanted out of me, an' now you throw me off. However, go on."

"What's that?" said the father again.

"He is desiring us to go on," replied the son.

"Then, in the name o' goodness, do so, avourneen. Susy will die downright."

"Where am I to dine to-day?" shouted the priest, in a louder voice. "I say, where am I to come in for my dinner, for I'm not expected at home, and my curate dines out?"

"I can't hear him," said the father.

"He says the curate dines out; an' he want's to know if he's to dine with us."

"Throth, an' he won't; not that we begrudge it to him; but for this day the sarra one we'll have but our own relations. Push an. An' Brian, too, poor fellow, that was always so proud of you!"

They had now reached the top of an ascent on the road, whilst the priest toiled up after them. In a few minutes they began to descend, and consequently were out of his sight.

No description of mine could give an adequate perception to the reader of what was felt by the family on hearing that the object of

Denis's hopes, and their own proud ambition, was at length accomplished. The bishop's letter was looked at, turned in every direction, and the seal inspected with a kind of wonderful curiosity, such as a superstitious person would manifest on seeing or touching some sacred relic. The period appointed for his departure now depended upon the despatch with which they could equip him for college. But until this event should arrive, his friends lost no opportunity of having him among them. Various were the treats he got in fair and market. Proud were his relations when paying him the respect which he felt right sincere pleasure in receiving. The medium between dignity and humility which he hit off in these scenes was worthy of being recorded; but, to do him justice, his forte lay in humility. He certainly condescended with a grace, and made them feel the honour done them by his vouchsafing to associate with such poor creatures as if he were one of themselves. To do *them also* justice, they appeared to feel his condescension; and, as a natural consequence, were ready to lick the very dust under his feet, considering him, as they did, a priest in everything but ordination.

Denis, besides his intercourse with humble relatives, was now asked to dine with the neighbouring clergymen, and frequently made one at their parties. In the beginning, his high opinion and awe of the clerical character kept him remarkably dull and sheepish. Many an excellent joke was cracked at his expense; and often did he ask himself what Phadrick Murray, his father's family, or his acquaintances in general, would say, if they saw his learning and his logic so villainously degraded. In proportion, however, as conviviality developed among his reverend friends many defects, opinions, and failings which he never suspected them to possess, so did he begin to gather courage and facility of expression. By degrees he proceeded modestly from the mild and timid effort at wit, to the steadier nerve of moderate confidence; another step brought him to the indifference of a man who can bear an unsuccessful attempt at pleasantry, without being discomposed; the third and last stage advanced him to downright assurance, which having reached, he stopped at nothing. From this forward he began to retort upon his clerical companions, who found that the sheepish youth whom they had often made ridiculous possessed skill, when properly excited, to foil them at their own weapons. He observed many things in their convivial meetings. The holy man, whom his flock looked upon as a being of the highest sanctity, when lit up into fun and frolic, Denis learned to estimate at his just value. He thought, besides, that a person resolved to go to heaven had as good a chance of being saved by the direct mercy of God, as through the ministration of men, whose only spiritual advantage over himself consisted in the mere fact of being in orders. To be sure, he saw the usual exceptions among them that are to be found among every other class; but he drew his conclusions from the general rule. All this, however, failed in removing that fundamental principle of honest superstition in which he had been trained. The clergymen whom he saw were only a few of those who constituted the

great body of the Church ; but when the long and sanctified calendar of saints and miracles opened upon him, there still remained enough to throw a dim and solemn charm of shadowy pomp around the visions of a mind naturally imaginative.

Messengers were once more sent abroad, to inform their friends of his triumph, who, on ascertaining that his journey was fixed for an early day, lost no time in pouring in, each with some gift suited to their circumstances. Some of these were certainly original, the appropriateness having been in every case determined by the wealth or poverty, ignorance or knowledge, of those who offered them. Some poor relation, for instance, brought him a shirt or two of materials so coarse that to wear it in a college would be out of the question ; others offered him a pair of brogues much too vulgar for the society he was about to enter ; others, again, would present him with books—for it is not at all uncommon to find in many illiterate Irish families half a dozen old volumes, of whose contents they are ignorant, lying in a dusty corner, where they are kept till some young scion shall be sufficiently instructed to peruse them. The names of these were singular enough. One presented him with "The Necessity of Penance," another with "Laugh and be Fat," a third with the "Key of Paradise," a fourth with "Hell Open ;" a fifth handed him a copy of the "Irish Rogues and Rapparees," a sixth gave him "Butler's Lives of Saints," a seventh "The Necessity of Fasting," an eighth "The Epicure's *Vade Mecum*." The list ran on very ludicrously. Among them were the "Garden of Love and Royal Flower of Fidelity ;" "An Essay on the Virtue of Celibacy ;" and another "On the Increase of Population in Ireland." To these we may add "The Devil upon Two Sticks," and "The Life of St. Anthony."

"Take these, Misther Denis," said the worthy souls ; "they're of no use to us, at all at all ; but they'll sarve you, of coorse, where you're goin', bekase when you want books in the college you can use them."

Honest Phadrick Murray, in lieu of a more valuable present, brought him his wife's largest and best shawl as a pockethandkerchief.

"Katty, sir, sent you this," said Phadrick, "as a pockethandkerchy ; an' be gorra, Misther Denis, if you begin at this corner, an' take it out o' the face, it'll last you six months at a time, anyhow."

Another neighbour came with a *cool* of rendered lard, hoping it might be serviceable.

"Norah, sir," said the honest friend who brought it, "sent you a crock of her own lard. When you're makin' colcanon, sir, or *sthilk*,[1] in the college, if you slip in a lump of this, it'll save you the price of butther. The grace 'ill be useful to you, whether or not ; an' they say there's a scarcity of it in the college."

[1] *Sthilk* is made by bruising a quantity of boiled potatoes and beans together. The potatoes, however, having first been reduced to a pulpy state, the beans are but partially broken. It is then put into a dish, and a pound of butter or rendered lard thrust into the middle of it.

A third brought him an oak sapling to keep in his hand about the purlieus of the establishment.

"We know," said he, "that you're given to arguin' an' to that thing you call logic, Misther Denis. Now, sir, if you're ever hard set in an argument or the like o' that, or if any o' the shthudjeents ud be throublesome or imperant, why give them a touch o' this—a lick of it, do you see; jist this-a-way. First come wid a back sthroke upon the left ear, if they want to be properly convinced; an' thin agin', afore they have time to recover, come down wid a visitation upon the kidney. My life for yours, they'll soon let you alone. Nothin' puzzles one in an argument more than it does."

"Ay," said Denis, "that is what they call in the books the *argumentum baculinum.* I accept your present, Roger; but I flatter myself I shall be a match for any of the collegians without having recourse to the *argumentum baculinum.*"

A poor old widow, who was distantly related to them, came upwards of four miles with two or three score of eggs, together with a cock and hen; the eggs for his own use, and the latter for breeding in Maynooth.

"Avourneen, Misther O'Shaughnessy," said she, in broken English, "when you ate out all the eggs, maybe you could get a sonsy little corner about the collegian that you're goin' to larn to be a priest in, an' put them both into it;"—pointing at the same time to the cock and hen—"an' whishper," she continued, in a low, friendly voice, "if you could get a weeshy whisp o' sthraw, an' slip it undher your own bed, it would make a nest for them, an' they'd lay an egg for your breakfast all days in the year. But, achora, don't let them be widout a nest egg: an' whishper—maybe you'd breed a clackin' out o' them, that you might sell. Sure they'd help to buy duds of cloes for you; or you might make presents of the crathurs to the blessed an' holy collegian himself. Wouldn't it be good to have him an your side—he'd help to make a gintleman of you, anyway. Faix, sure he does it for many, they say. An' whishper—the breed, avourneen, is good; an' I'm not afeard to say that there never was sich a chicken in the whole collegian as the ould cock himself. He's the darlin' all out, an' can crow so stoutly that it bates the world. Sure his comb's a beauty to look at, the darlin'; an' only it's to yourself, an' in regard of the blessed place he's goin' to, I wouldn't part wid him to nobody whatsomever at all, good or bad."

The most original gift of all was a purse, formed of a small bladder, ingeniously covered with silk. It was given to him by his uncle, as a remembrance of him, in the first place, and secondly, for a more special purpose.

"This will sarve you, sir," said his uncle, "an' I'll tell you how: if you want to smuggle in a sup of good whisky—as of coorse you will, plase goodness—why this houlds exactly a pint, an' is the very thing for it. The sorra one among them will ever think of searchin' your purse, at least for whisky. Put it in your pocket, Misther Dionissis; an' I'd take it as a great kindness if you'd write me a scrape or two

of the pen, mentionin' what a good parish ud be worth : you'll soor be able to tell me ; for I've some notion myself of puttin' Barny to the Latin."

Denis was perfectly aware of the honest warmth of heart with which these simple tokens of esteem were presented to him ; and young as he was, his knowledge of their habits and prejudices prevented him from disappointing them by a refusal. He consequently accepted everything offered him, appropriated to himself whatever was suitable to his wants, converted the remainder into pocket-money, and, of course, kept his conscience void of *offence* towards them all ; a state of Christian virtue which his refusal of any one gift would have rendered difficult.

On the day before his departure the friends and relations of the family assembled to hold their farewell meeting. The same spirit which marked all their rustic *symposia* presided in this ; if we except a feeling of sorrow natural to his family on being separated from one they loved so affectionately. Denis, who was never deficient in warmth of feeling, could not be insensible to the love and pride with which his family had always looked upon him. Ambition, as he approached it, lost much of its fictitious glitter. A sense of sorrow, if not of remorse for the fastidious and overbearing spirit he had manifested to them, pressed upon his heart. Pride, in fact, was expelled ; nature resumed her empire over him ; he looked upon the last two months of his life as a man would be apt to do who had been all that time under the dominion of a feverish dream. We do not say, however, that either ambition or superstition was thoroughly expelled from his mind ; for it is hard at all times to root them out of the system of man : but they ceased to govern him altogether. A passion, too, as obstinate as either of them, was determined to dispute their power. The domestic affections softened his heart ; but love, which ambition left for dead, was only stunned ; it rose again, and finding a favourable position, set its seal to his feelings.

Denis himself, some days before that appointed for his departure, became perfectly conscious that his affections were strongly fixed upon Susan Connor. The nature of their last interview filled him with shame ; nay, more, it inspired him with pity for the fair, artless girl whom he had so unfeelingly insulted. The manner in which he had won her young affections ; the many tender interviews that had passed between them ; the sacred promises of unchangeable love they had made to each other, all crowded to his imagination with a power which reduced his spiritual ambition and ecclesiastical pride at least to the possession only of a divided empire. He had, therefore, with his book in his hand as usual, taken many solitary walks for the preceding few days, with the expectation of meeting Susan. He heard that for the last month or six weeks she had looked ill, been in low spirits, and lost her health. The cause of this change, though a secret to the world, was known to him. He felt, indeed, that an interview between them was indispensable ; but had it not been so, we question whether he would have been able to leave home without seeing her.

His evening strolls, however, up until the day before his setting out for college, were fruitless. Susan, who heretofore had been in the habit of walking in the evenings among the green dells around her father's house, was ever since their last meeting almost invisible. In the meantime, as the day before that of his leaving the neighbourhood *had* arrived, and as an interview with her was, in a religious point of view, essentially necessary, he took his book in the course of the evening, and by a path slightly circuitous, descended the valley that ran between his father's house and hers. With solemn strides he perambulated it in every direction—north, south, east, and west; not a natural bower in the glen was unexplored; not a green quiet nook unsearched; not a shady tree unexamined; but all to no purpose. Yet, although he failed in meeting herself, a thousand objects brought her to his heart. Every dell, natural bower, and shady tree presented him with a history of their past affections Here was the spot where, with beating heart and crimson cheek, she had first breathed out in broken music the acknowledgment of her love; there had another stolen meeting, a thousand times the sweeter for being stolen, taken place. Every spot, in fact, was dear to him, and every object associated itself with delightful emotions that kindled new life in a spirit from which their parent affections had not yet passed away.

Denis now sought the only other place where he had any likelihood of meeting her: this was at the well below her father's house. He walked down along the banks of the little stream that ran past it, until he reached a thorn-bush that grew within a few yards of the spring. Under this he sat, anxiously hoping that Susan might come to fill her evening pail, as he knew she was wont to do. A thick flowery branch of the hawthorn, for it was the latter end of May, hung down from the trunk, and served as a screen through which he could observe her, should she appear, without being visible himself.

It was now the hour of twilight; the evening was warm and balmy; the whitethorn under which he sat, and the profusion of wild-flowers that spangled the bosom of the green glen, breathed their fragrance around him, and steeped the emotions and remembrances which crowded thickly on him in deep and exquisite tenderness. Up in the air he heard the quavering hum of the snipe, as it rose and fell in undulating motion, and the creak of the rail in many directions around him. From an adjoining meadow in the distance the merry voices of the village children came upon his ear, as they gathered the wild honey which dropped like dew from the soft clouds upon the long grassy stalks, and meadow-sweet, on whose leaves it lay like amber. He remembered when he and Susan, on meeting there for a similar purpose, felt the first mysterious pleasure in being together, and the unaccountable melancholy produced by separation and absence.

At length he heard a footstep; but he could not persuade himself that the slow and lingering tread of the person approaching him was that of Susan, so much did it differ from the buoyant and elastic step with which she used to trip along. On looking through the branches, however, he perceived her coming towards him, carrying the pitcher a

usual in her hand. The blood was already careering at full speed through his veins, and the palpitations of his heart were loud enough to be neard by the ear.

Oh, beauty, beauty ! *teterrima causa belli*, thou dost play the devil with the hearts of men ! Who is there who doth not wish to look upon thee, from the saint to the sinner ?—None. For thee worlds have been lost ; nations swept off the earth ; thrones overturned ; and cities laid in ashes ! Adam, David, Marc Antony, Abelard, and Denis O'Shaughnessy exhibit histories of thy power never to be forgotten, but the greatest of these is Denis O'Shaughnessy.

Susan was about the middle size ; her tresses, like those of the daughters of her country, were a fair brown, and abundant. Her features were not such, we admit, as mark regular and scientific perfection, and perhaps much of their power was owing to their not being altogether symmetrical. Her great charm consisted in a spirit of youthful innocence so guileless that the very light of purity and truth seemed to break in radiance from her countenance. Her form was round, light, and flexible. When she smiled, her face seemed to lose the character of its mortality—so seraphic and full of an indescribable spell were its lineaments ; that is, the spell was felt by its thrilling influence upon the beholder, rather than by any extraordinary perception of her external beauty. The general expression of her countenance, however, was that of melancholy. No person could look upon her white forehead and dark flashing eyes, without perceiving that she was full of tenderness and enthusiasm ; but let the light of cheerfulness fall upon her face, and you wished never to see it beam with any other spirit. In her met those extremes of character peculiar to her country. Her laughing lips expanded with the playful delicacy of mirth, or breathed forth, with untaught melody and deep pathos. her national songs of sorrow.

A little before she made her appearance the moon had risen and softened with her dewy light the calm secluded scene around them. Denis, too, had an opportunity of seeing the lovely girl more distinctly. Her dress was simple but becoming. Her hair, except the side ringlets that fell to heighten the beauty of her neck, was bound up with a comb which Denis himself had presented to her. She wore a white dimity bedgown, that sat close to her well-formed person, descended below her knee, and opened before ; the sleeves of it did not reach the elbow, but displayed an arm that could not be surpassed for whiteness and beauty. The bedgown was frilled about the shoulder, which it covered, leaving the neck only and the upper part of her snowy bosom visible. A dark ribbon, tied about her waist, threw her figure into exquisite outline, and gave her that simple elegance which at once bespeaks the harmony of due proportion.

On reaching the well she filled her vessel, and placed it on a small mound beside her ; then sitting down, she mused for some time, and turning her eyes towards Denis's father's, sighed deeply.

" It's the least," said the humbled girl, " that I may look towards the house that the only one I ever loved, or ever will love, lives in.

Little I thought when I loved him that I was standin' between him an' God. Loved him! I wish I could say it was *past*. I wish I could; for I am afeard that till my weak heart breaks it will love him still. God pity me! It would be well for me I had never seen him. But why he should go to Maynooth without givin' me back my promise, I cannot tell."

Denis rose and approached her. Susan, on seeing him, started, and her lover could perceive that she hastily wiped the tears from her eyes A single glance, however, convinced her that it was he; and such was the guileless simplicity of her heart, joined to the force of habit, that her face beamed with one of her wonted smiles at his appearance. This soon passed away, and her features again resumed an expression of deep melancholy.

Our hero now forgot his learning; his polysyllables were laid aside, and his pedantry utterly abandoned. His pride, too, was gone, and the petty pomp of artificial character flung aside like an unnecessary garment which only oppresses the wearer.

"Susan," said he, "I am sorry to see you look so pale and unhappy. I deeply regret it; and I could not permit this day to pass without seeing and speaking to you. If I go to-morrow, Susan, may I now ask in what light will you remember me?"

"I'll remember you without anger, Denis; with sorrow will I remember you, but not, as I said, in anger; though God knows, and you know, the only token you lave me to remember you by is a broken heart."

"Susan," said Denis, "it was an unhappy attachment, as circumstances have turned out: and I wish for both our sakes we had never loved one another. For some time past my heart has been torn different ways, and to tell you the truth, I acknowledge that within the last three or four months I have been little less than a villain to you."

"You speak harshly of yourself, Denis; I hope more so than you deserve."

"No, Susy. With my heart fixed upon other hopes, I continued to draw your affections closer and closer to me."

"Well, that was wrong, Denis; but you loved me long before that time, an' it's not so asy a thing to draw away the heart from what we love! that is, to draw it away *for ever*, Denis, even although greater things may rise up before us."

As she pronounced the last words, her voice, which she evidently strove to keep firm, became unsteady.

"That's true, Susan, I know it; but I will never forgive myself for acting a double part to you and to the world. There is not a pang you suffer but ought to fall as a curse upon my head, for leading you into greater confidence, at a time when I was not seriously resolved to fulfil my vows to you."

"Denis," said the unsuspecting girl, "you're imposin' on yourself—you never could do so bad, so treacherous an act as that. No, you never could, Denis; an', above all the world, to a heart that loved and trusted you as mine did. I won't believe it, even from your own lips

You surely loved me, Denis, and in that case you *couldn't* be desateful to me."

"I never loved you half so well as I ought, Susy; and I never was worthy of you. Susy, I tell you—I tell you—my heart is breaking for your sake. It would have been well for both of us we had never seen, or known, or loved each other; for I know by my own heart what you must suffer."

"Denis, don't be cast down on my account; before I ever thought of you, when I was runnin' about the glens here, a lonely little orphan, I was often sorry, without knowin' why. Sometimes I used to wonder at it, and search my mind to find out what occasioned it: but I never could. I suppose it was because I saw other girls, like myself, havin' their little brothers an' sisters to play with; or because I had no mother's voice to call me night or mornin', or her bosom to lay my head on, if I was sick or tired. I suppose it was this. Many a time, Denis, even then, I knew what sorrow was, and I often thought that, come what would to others, there was sorrow before *me*. I now find I was right; but for all that, Denis, it's betther that we should give up one another in time, than be unhappy by my bein' the means of turnin' you from the ways and duties of God."

The simple and touching picture which she drew of her orphan childhood, together with the tone of resignation and sorrow which ran through all she said, affected Denis deeply.

"Susan," he replied, "I am much changed of late. The prospect before me is a dark one—a mysterious one. It is not many months since my head was dizzy with the gloomy splendour which the pomps and ceremonies of the Church—soon, I trust, to be restored in this country to all her pride and power—presented to my imagination. But I have mingled with those on whom before this—that is, during my boyhood—I looked with awe, as on men who held vested in themselves some mysterious and spiritual power. I have mingled with them, Susan, and I find them neither better nor worse than those who still look upon them as I once did."

"Well, but, Denis, how does that bear upon your views?"

"It does, Susan. I said I have found them neither better nor worse than their fellow-creatures; but I believe they are not so happy. I think I could perceive a gloom, even in their mirth, that told of some particular thought or care that haunted them like a spirit. Some of them, and not a few, in the moments of undisguised feeling, dissuaded me against ever entering the Church."

"I'm sure they're happy," said Susan. "Some time ago, accordin' to your own words, you thought the same; but something has turned your heart from the good it was fixed upon. You're in a dangerous time, Denis; and it's not to be wondhered at, if the temptations of the devil should thry you *now*, in hopes to turn you from the service of God. This is a warnin' to me, too, Denis. May heaven above forbid that *I* should be the means of temptin' you from the duty that's before you!"

"No, Susan dear, it's not temptation, but the fear of temptation, that prevails with me."

"But, Denis, surely if you think yourself not worthy to enther that blessed state, you have time enough to avoid it."

"Ay, but, Susy, there is the difficulty. I am now so placed that I can hardly go back. First, the disgrace of refusing to enter the Church would lie upon me as if I had committed a crime. Again, I would break my father's and mother's heart: and rather than do that, I could almost submit to be miserable for life. And, finally, I could not live in the family, nor bear the indignation of my brothers and other relations. You know, Susan, as well as I do, the character attached to those who put their friends to the expense of educating them for the Church, who raise their hopes and their ambition, and afterwards disappoint them."

"I know it."

"This, Susan dear, prevails with me. Besides, the Church now is likely to rise from her ruins. I believe that if a priest did his duty, he might possibly possess miraculous power. There is great pomp and splendour in her ceremonies, a sense of high and boundless authority in her pastors; there is rank in her orders sufficient even for ambition. Then the deference, the awe, and the humility with which they are approached by the people—ah! Susan, there is much still in the character of a priest for the human heart to covet. The power of saying mass, of forgiving sin, of relieving the departed spirits of the faithful in another world, and of mingling in our holy sacrifices with the glorious worship of the cherubims, or angels, in heaven—all this is the privilege of a priest, and what earthly rank can be compared to it?"

"None at all, Denis—none at all. Oh, think this way still, and let no earthly temptation—no—don't let—even me—what am *I?*—a poor humble girl—oh! no, let nothing keep you back from this."

The tears burst from her eyes, however, as she spoke.

"But, Denis," she added, "there is one thing that turns my brain. I fear that, even afther your ordination, I couldn't look upon you as I would upon another man. Oh, my heart would break if one improper thought of it was fixed upon you then."

"Susy, hear me. I could give up all but you. I could bear to disappoint father, mother, and all; but the thought of giving you up for ever is terrible. I have been latterly in a kind of dream. I have been among friends and relatives until my brain was turned; but now I am restored to myself, and I find I cannot part with you. I would gladly do it; but I cannot. Oh, no, Susan dear, my love for you was dimmed by other passions; but it was not extinguished. It now burns stronger and purer in my heart than ever. It does—it does. And, Susan, I always loved you."

Susan paused for a time, and unconsciously plucked a wild flower which grew beside her: she surveyed it a moment, and exclaimed—

"Do you see this flower, Denis? it's a faded primrose. I'm like that flower in one sense; *I'm* faded; my heart's broke."

"No, my beloved Susan, don't say so; you're only low-spirited. Why should your heart be broke, and you in the very bloom of youth and beauty?"

"Do you remember our last meetin', Denis? Oh, how could you be so cruel then as to bid me think of marryin' another, as if I had loved you for anything but yourself? I'm but a simple girl, Denis, and know but little of the world; but if I was to live a thousand years, you would always see the sorrow that your words made me feel visible upon my countenance. I'm not angry with you, Denis; but I'm telling you the truth."

"Susan, my darling, this is either weakness of mind or ill-health. I will see you as beautiful and happy as ever. For my part, I now tell you that no power on earth can separate us! Yes, my beloved Susan, I will see you as happy and happier than I have ever seen you. That will be when you are my own young and guileless wife."

"Ah, no, Denis! My mind is made up: I can never be your wife. Do you think that I would bring the anger of God upon myself by temptin' you back from the holy office you're enterin' into? Think of it yourself, Denis. Your feelings are melted now by our discoorse, and, maybe, because I'm near you; but when time passes, you'll be glad that in the moment of weakness you didn't give way to them. I know it's natural for you to love me now. You're lavin' me—you're lavin' the place where I am—the little river and the glen where we so often met, and where we often spent many a happy hour together. That has an effect upon you; for why should I deny it?—you see it—it is hard—very hard—even upon myself."

She neither sobbed nor cried so as to be heard, but the tears gushed down her cheeks in torrents.

"Susan," said Denis, in an unsteady voice, "you speak in vain. Every word you say tells me that I cannot live without you; and I will not."

"Don't say that, Denis. Suppose we should be married, think of what I would suffer if I saw you in poverty or distress, brought on because you married *me!* Why, my heart would sink entirely under it. Then your friends would never give me a warm heart. *Me!* they would never give *yourself* a warm heart; and I would rather be dead than see you brought to shame, or ill-treatment, or poverty, on my account. Pray to God, Denis, to grant you grace to overcome whatever you feel for me. *I* have prayed both for you and myself. Oh, pray to him, Denis, sincerely, that he may enable you to forget that ever such a girl—such an unhappy girl—as Susan Connor ever lived!"

Poor Denis was so much overcome that he could not restrain his tears. He gazed upon the melancholy countenance of the fair girl in a delirium of love and admiration; but in a few minutes he replied:

"Susan, your words are lost: I am determined. Oh! great heaven, what a treasure was I near losing! Susan, hear me: I will bear all that this world can inflict; I will bear shame, ill-treatment, anger, scorn, and every harsh word that may be uttered against me; I will renounce Church, spiritual power, rank, honour; I will give up father and family—all—all that this world could flatter me with · yes, I will renounce each and all for your sake! Do not dissuade me; my mind is fixed, and no power on earth can change it."

"Yes, Denis," she replied, calmly, "there is a power, and a weak power, too, that will change it; for I will change it. Don't think, Denis, that in arguin' with you, against the feelins of my own heart, I am doin' it without sufferin'. Oh, no, indeed! You know, Denis, I am a lonely girl; that I have neither brother, nor sister, nor mother to direct me. Sufferin'!—oh, I wish you knew it! Denis, you must forget me. I'm hopeless now: my heart, as I said, is broke and I'm strivin' to fix it upon a happier world! Oh! if I had a mother or a sister, that I could, when my breast is likely to burst, throw myself in their arms, and cry and confess all I feel! But I'm alone, and must bear all my own sorrows. Oh, Denis! I'm not without knowin' how hard the task is that I have set to myself. Is it nothing to give up all that the heart is fixed upon? Is it nothing to walk about this glen, and the green fields, to have one's eyes upon them, and to remember what happiness one has had in them, knowin', at the same time, that it's all blasted? Oh, is it nothing to look upon the green earth itself, and all its beauty—to hear the happy songs and the joyful voices of all that are about us—the birds singing sweetly, the music of the river flowin'—to see the sun shinin', and to hear the rustlin' of the trees in the warm winds of summer—to see and hear all this, and to feel that a young heart is brakin', or already broken within us—that we are goin' to lave it all—all we loved—and to go down into the clay under us? Oh, Denis, this is hard!—bitter is it to me, I confess it; for something tells me it will be my fate soon!"

"But, Susan ——"

"Hear me out. I have now repated what I know I must suffer—what I know I must lose. This is my lot, and I must bear it. Now, Denis, will you grant your own Susan one request?"

"If it was that my life should save yours, I would grant it."

"It's the last and only one I will ever ask of you. My health has been ill, Denis; my strength is gone, and I feel I am gettin' worse every day: now when you hear that I am—that I am—*gone*,—will you offer up the first Mass you say for my pace and rest in another world? I say the *first*, for you know there's more virtue in a first Mass than in any other. Your Susan will be then in the dust, and you may feel sorrow, but not love for her."

"Never, Susan! For God's sake, forbear! You will drive me distracted. As I hope to meet judgment, I think I never loved you till now; and by the same oath, I will not change my purpose in making you mine."

"Then you *do* love me still, Denis? And you would give up *all* for your Susan? Answer me truly, for the ear of God is open to our words and thoughts."

"Then, before God, I love you too strongly for words to express: and I would give up all for your sake!"

Susan turned her eyes upon vacancy, and Denis observed that a sudden and wild light broke from them, which alarmed him exceedingly. She put her open hand upon her forehead, as if she felt pain, and remained glancing fearfully around her for a few minutes; her

countenance, which became instantly like a sheet of paper, lost all its intelligence, except, perhaps, what might be gleaned from a smile of the most ghastly and desolating misery.

"Gracious heaven! Susan, dear, what's the matter? Oh, my God, your face is like marble! Dearest Susan, speak to me! Oh, speak to me, or I will go distracted!"

She looked upon him long and steadily; but he perceived with delight that her consciousness was gradually returning. At length she drew a deep sigh, and requested him to listen.

"Denis," said she, "you must now be a man. We can never be married. I AM PROMISED TO ANOTHER!"

"Promised to another! Your brain is turned, Susy. Collect yourself, dearest, and think of what you say."

"I know what I say—I know it too well! What did I say? Why—why," she added, with an unsettled look, "that I'm promised to another! It is true—true as God's in heaven! Oh, Denis! why did you lave me so long without seein' me? I said my heart was broke, and you will soon know that it has bitter, bitter rason to be so. See here."

She had, during her reply, taken from her bosom a small piece of brown cloth, of a square shape, marked with the letters I. M. I., the initials of the names of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. She kissed it fervently as she spoke, and desired Denis to look upon it and hear.

"When you saw me last," she continued, "I left you in anger, because I thought you no longer loved me. Many a scaldin' tear I shed that nobody witnessed; many a wringin' my heart felt since that time. I got low, and, as I said, my health left me. I began to think of what I ought to do; and, bein' so much alone, my thoughts were never off it. At last I remembered the Virgin Mother of God as bein' once a woman, and the likelier to pity one of her own kind in sorrow. I then thought of a scapular; and made a promise to myself that, if you didn't come within a certain time, I would dedicate myself to her for ever. I saw that you neglected me, and I heard so much of the way in which you spent your time, how you were pleasant and merry while my heart was breakin', that I made a vow to remain a spotless virgin all my life. I got a scapular, too, that I might be strengthened to keep my holy promise; for you didn't come to me within the time. This is it in my hand. It is now on me. THE VOW IS MADE, AND I AM MISERABLE FOR EVER!"

Denis sobbed and wrung his hands, whilst tears intensely bitter fell from his eyes.

"Oh, Susan!" he exclaimed, "what have you done? Oh, you have ruined *me* utterly! You have rendered *us both* for ever miserable!"

"Miserable!" she exclaimed, with flashing eyes. "Who talks of misery?" But again she put her hand to her forehead, and endeavoured to recollect herself. "Denis," she added—"Denis, my brain *is* turning! Oh, I have no friend! Oh, mother that I have never seen, but as if it was in a dream—mother, daughter of you

daughter's heart, look down from heaven and pity your orphan child in her sore trouble and affliction! Oh, how often did I miss you, mother, darlin', durin' all my life! In sickness I had not you tendher hands about me; in sorrow I could not hear your voice; and in joy and happiness you were never with me to share them! I had not your advice, my blessed mother, to guide and direct me—to tache me what was right and what was wrong! Oh, if you will not hear your own poor lonely orphan, who will you hear? if you will not assist her, who ought you to assist? for, as sure as I stand here this night, you are a blessed saint in heaven. But let me not forget the Virgin Queen of Heaven that I am bound to. *I kneel to you*, Hope of the Afflicted! To you let them go who have a broken heart, as I have! Queen of Glory, pity me! Star of the Sea—Comfort of the Hopeless—Refuge of Sinners, hear me, strengthen, and support me! And you will, too. Who did you ever cast away, mild and beautiful Virgin of Heaven? 'As the lily among thorns, so are you among the daughters of Adam!'[1] Yes, Denis, she will support me—she *will* support me! I feel her power on me now! I see the angels of heaven about her, and her mild countenance smilin' sweetly upon the broken flower. Yes, Denis, her glory is upon me!"

The last words were uttered with her eyes flashing wildly as before, and her whole person and countenance evidently under the influence of a highly excited enthusiasm, or perhaps a touch of momentary insanity.

Poor Denis stood with streaming eyes, incapable of checking or interrupting her. He had always known that her education and understanding were above the common; but he never anticipated from her such capacity for deep feeling, united to so much vivacity of imagination as she then displayed. Perhaps he had not philosophy enough, at that period of his youth, to understand the effects of a solitary life upon a creature full of imagination and sensibility. The scenery about her father's house was wild, and the glens singularly beautiful; Susan lived among them alone, so that she became in a manner enamoured of solitude; which, probably, more than anything else, gives tenderness to feeling, and force to the imaginative faculties. Soon after she had pronounced the last words, however, her good sense came to her aid.

"Denis," said she, "you have seen my weakness, but you must now see my strength. You know we have a trial to go through before we part for ever."

"Oh! Susy, don't say 'for ever.' You know that the vow you made was a rash vow. It may be set aside."

"It was *not* a rash vow, Denis. I made it with a firm intention of keepin' it, and keep it I will. The Mother of God is not to be mocked because I am weak, or choose to prefer my own will to hers."

"But, Susy, the Church can dissolve it. You know she has power

[1] The form of the Service to the Virgin, from which most of the above expressions are taken, is certainly replete with beauty and poetry.

to bind and loose. Oh, for God's sake, Susy, if you ever loved me, don't attempt to take back your promise."

"I love you too well to destroy you, Denis. I will never stand between you and God, for that would be my crime. I will never bring disgrace, or shame, or poverty upon you; for surely these things would fall upon you as a punishment for desartin' him. If you were another —if you weren't intended to be the servant of God, I could beg with you—starve with you—die with you. But when I am gone, remember that I gave up all my hopes that you might succeed in yours. I'm sure *that* is love. Now, Denis, we must return our promises, the time is passin', we'll both be missed from home."

"Susan, for the sake of my happiness, both in this world and in the next, don't take away all hope. Make me not miserable and wretched; send me not into the Church a hypocrite. If you do, I will charge you with my guilt; I will charge you with the crimes of a man who will care but little what he does."

"You will have friends, Denis; pious men, who will direct you, and guide you, and wean your heart from me and the world. You will soon bless me for this. Denis," she added, with a smile of unutterable misery, "my mind *is* made up. I belong now to the Virgin Mother of God. I never will be so wicked as to forsake her for a mortal. If I was to marry you with a broken vow upon me, I could not prosper. The curse of God and of his Blessed Mother would follow us both."

Denis felt perfectly aware of the view entertained by Susan respecting such a vow as she had taken. To reason with her was only to attack a prejudice which scorned reason. Besides this, he was not himself altogether free from the impression of its being a vow too solemn to be broken without the sanction of the Church.

"Let us go," said Susan, "to the same spot where we first promised. It was under this tree, in this month, last year. Let us give it back there."

The hand-promise in Ireland between the marriageable young of both sexes is considered the most solemn and binding of all obligations. Few would rely upon the word or oath of any man who had been known to break a hand-promise. And, perhaps, few of the country girls would marry or countenance the addresses of a young person known to have violated such a pledge. The vow is a solemn one, and, of course, given by mutual consent; by mutual consent also must it be withdrawn, otherwise it is considered still binding. Whenever death removes one of the parties, without the other having had an opportunity of "giving it back," the surviving party comes, and in the presence of witnesses, first grasping the hand of the deceased, repeats the form of words usual in withdrawing it. Some of these scenes are very touching and impressive, particularly one which the author had an opportunity of witnessing. It is supposed that in cases of death, if the promise be not dissolved, the spirit of the departed returns and haunts the survivor until it be cancelled.

When Denis and Susan had reached the hawthorn, they both knelt down. So exhausted, however, had Susan been by the agitation of her

feelings that Denis was under the necessity of assisting her to the place. He could perceive, too, that amid the workings of her religious enthusiasm she trembled like an aspen leaf.

"Now," said she, "you are stronger than I am, begin and repeat the words; I will repeat them with you."

"No," replied Denis, "I will never begin. I will never be the first to seal both your misery and mine."

"I am scarcely able," said she; "dear Denis, don't ask me to do what I have not strength for. But it's useless," she added; 'you will never begin unless *I* do."

They then blessed themselves after the form of their Church, and as they extended their right hands to each other the tears fell fast from the eyes of both. The words they repeated were the same, with the difference of the name only.

"I, Susan Connor, in the presence of God, do release you, Denis O'Shaughnessy, from your promise of marriage to me, and from all promises of marriage that you ever made me. I now give you back that promise of marriage, and all promises of marriage you ever made me. To which I call God to witness."

Denis repeated the same words, substituting the name of Susan Connor.

The sobs of Susan were loud and incessant, even before she had concluded the words; their eyes were fixed upon each other with a hopeless and agonizing expression; but no sooner were they uttered than a strong hysteric sense of suffocation rose to her throat; she panted rapidly for breath; Denis opened his arms, and she fell, or rather threw herself, over in a swoon upon his bosom. To press his lips to hers, and carry her to the brink of the well, was but the work of a moment. There he laid her, and after having sprinkled her face with water, proceeded to slap the palms of her hands, exclaiming—

"Susan, my beloved, will you not hear me? Oh, look upon me, my heart's dearest treasure, and tell me that you're living. Gracious God! her heart is broken—she is dead! This—this—is the severest blow of all! I have killed her!"

She opened her eyes as he spoke, and Denis, in stooping to assist her, weeping at the same time like a child, received—a bang from a cudgel that made his head ring.

"Your sowl to the divil, you larned vagabone," said her father, for it was he, "is this the way you're preparin' yourself for the Church? Comin' over that innocent colleen of a daughter o' mine before you set out," he added, taking Denis a second thwack across the shoulders—"before you set out for Maynewth!"

"Why, you miserable vulgarian," said Denis, "I scorn you from the head to the heel. Desist, I say," for the father was about to lay in another swinger upon his kidney—"desist, I say, and don't approximate, or I will entangle the ribs of you!"

"My sowl to glory," said the father, "if ever I had a greater mind to ate my dinner than I have to anoint you wid this cudgel, you black-coated skamer!"

"Get out, you barbarian," replied Denis, "how dare you talk about unction in connection with a cudgel? Desist, I say, or I will retaliate, if you approximate an inch. Desist, or I will baptize you in the well, as Philip did the Ethiopian, without a sponsor. No man but a miserable barbarian would have had the vulgarity to interrupt us in the manner you did. Look at your daughter's situation!"

"The hussy," replied the father, "it's the supper she ought to have ready, instead of coortin' wid sich a larned vag—Heavens above me! What ails my child? Susy! Susy, alanna, dhas! what's over you? Oh, I see how it is," he continued—"I see how it is! This accounts for her low spirits an' bad health for some time past! Susy, rouse yourself, avourneen! Sure I'm not angry wid you! My sowl to glory, Denny Shaughnessy, but you have broke my child's heart, I doubt!"

"Owen," said Denis, "your indecorous interruption has stamped you with the signature of genuine ignorance and vulgarity; still, I say, we must have some conversation on that subject immediately. Yes, I love your daughter a thousand times better than my own life."

"Faith, I'll take care that we'll have discoorse about it," replied the father. "If you have been a villain to the innocent girl—if you have, Denny, why you'll meet your God sooner than you think. Mark my words. I have but one life, and I'll lose it for her sake, if she has come to ill."

"Here," said Denis, "let me sprinkle her face with this cool water, that we may recover her, if possible. Your anger and your outrage, Owen, overcame the timid creature. Speak kindly to her, she is recovering. Thank God, she is recovering."

"Susy, avourneen," said the father, "rouse yourself, ma colleen; rouse yourself, an' don't thrimble that way. The sorra one o' me's angry wid you, at all at all."

"Oh, bring me home," said the poor girl. "Father dear, have no bad opinion of me. I done nothing, an' I hope I never will do anything that would bring the blush of shame to your face."

"That's as true as that God's in heaven," observed Denis. "The angels in his presence are not purer than she is."

"I take her own word for it," said the father; "a lie, to the best of my knowledge, never came from her lips."

"Let us assist her home," said Denis. "I told you that we must have some serious conversation about her. I'll take one arm, and do you take the other."

"Do so," said the father, "an', Denny, as you're the youngest and the strongest, jist take up that pitcher o' wather in your hand, an' carry it to the house above."

Denis, who was dressed in his best black from top to toe, made a wry face or two at this proposal. He was able, however, for Susan's sake, to compromise his dignity; so looking about him, to be certain that there was no other person observing them, he seized the pitcher in one hand, gave Susan his arm, and in this unheroic manner assisted to conduct her home.

In about half an hour, or better, after this, Denis and Owen Connor proceeded in close and earnest conversation towards old Shaughnessy's. On entering, Denis requested to speak with his father and brothers in private.

"Father," said he, "this night is pregnant—that is, *vulgariter*, in the family way—with my fate."

"Throth it is, avick. Glory be to goodness!"

"Here is Owen Connor, an honest, dacent neighbour ——"

"Throth, he is an honest, dacent man," said the father, interrupting him.

"Yes," replied the son, "I agree with you. Well, he has a certain disclosure or proposal to make, which you will be pleased to take into your most serious consideration. I, for my part, cannot help being endowed with my own gifts, and if I happen to possess a magnet to attract feminine sensibility, it is to heaven I owe it, and not to myself."

"It is," said the father, "glory be to his name!"

"Don't be alarmed, or surprised, or angry, at anything Owen Connor may say to you. I speak *significantly*. There are perplexities in all human events, and the cardinal hinge of fate is for ever turning. Now I must withdraw; but in the meantime, I will be found taking a serenade behind the garden, if I am wanted."

"Brian," said the father, "get the bottle; we can't on this night, anyway, talk to Owen Connor, or to anybody else, wid dhry lips."

The bottle was accordingly got, and Owen, with no very agreeable anticipations, found himself compelled to introduce a very hazardous topic.

Denis, as he said, continued to walk to-and-fro behind the garden. He thought over the incidents of the evening, but had no hope that Owen Connor's proposal would be accepted. He knew his father and family too well for that. With respect to Susan's vow, he felt certain that any change of opinion on her part was equally improbable. It was clear, then, that he had no pretext for avoiding Maynooth; and as the shame, affliction, and indignation of the family would, he knew, be terrible, he resolved to conform himself to his circumstances, trusting to absence for that diminution of affection which it often produces. Having settled these points in his mind, he began to grope that part of his head which had come in contact with Owen Connor's cudgel. He had strong surmises that a bump existed, and on examining, he found that a powerful organ of self-esteem had been created.

At this moment he saw Owen Connor running past him at full speed, pursued by his father and brothers, the father brandishing a cudgel in his hand. The son, who understood all, intercepted the pursuers, commanding them in a loud voice to stop. With his brothers he succeeded; but the father's wrath was not to be appeased so easily. Nothing now remained but to stand in his way, and arrest him by friendly violence; Denis, therefore, seized him, and, by assuming all his authority, at length prevailed upon him to give over the chase.

"Only think of him," exclaimed the father, breathless—"only think of him havin' the assurance to propose a match between *you* an' his baby-faced daughter! Ho! *Dher manim*, Owen Connor," he shouted, shaking the staff at Owen as he spoke—"*Dher manim!* if I was near you, I'd put your bones through other, for darin' to mintion sich a thing!"

Owen Connor, on finding that he was no longer pursued, stood to reconnoitre the enemy:—

"Denis Oge," he shouted back, "be off to Maynooth as fast as possible, except you wish to have my poor child left fatherless entirely. Go way, an' my blessin' be along wid you; but let there be never another word about *that* business while you live."

"Father," said Denis, "I'm scandalised at your conduct on this dignified occasion. I am also angry with Brian and the rest of you. Did you not observe that the decent man was advanced in liquor? I would have told you so at once, were it not that he was present while I spoke. Did I not give you as strong a hint as possible? Did I not tell you that 'I spoke *significantly?*' Now hear me. Take the first opportunity of being reconciled to Owen Connor. Be civil to him; for I assure you he esteems *me* very highly. Be also kind to his daughter, who is an excellent girl; but, I repeat it, her father *esteems me* highly."

"Does he think highly of *you*, Denis?"

"I have said so," he replied.

"Then, throth, we're sorry for what has happened, poor man. But the never a one o' me, Denis, saw the laste sign of liquor about him. Throth, we will make it up wid him, thin. An' we'll be kind to his daughter, too, Denis."

"Then, as a proof that you will follow my advice, I lay it on you as a duty, to let me know how they are, whenever you write to me."

"Throth, we will, Denis;—indeed will we. Come in now, dear; this is the last night you're to be wid us, an' they're all missin' you in the house."

On that night no person slept in Denis O'Shaughnessy's, except our hero and his mother and sisters. As morning approached, a heaviness of spirit prevailed among the family, which of course was not felt by any except his immediate relations. The more distant friends, who remained with them for the night, sang and plied the bottle with a steadiness which prevented them from feeling the want of rest. About six o'clock, breakfast was ready, Denis dressed, and every arrangement made for his immediate departure. His parents—his brothers, and his sisters were all in tears, and he himself could master his emotions with great difficulty. At length the hour to which the family of our candidate had looked forward arrived, and Denis rose to depart for Maynooth. Except by the sobs and weeping, the silence was unbroken when he stood up to bid them farewell.

The first he embraced was his eldest brother, Brian: "Brian," said he, but he could not proceed—his voice failed him; he then extended his hand, but Brian clasped him in his arms—kissed his beloved

brother, and wept with strong grief; even then there was not a dry eye in the house. The parting with his other brothers was equally tender—they wept loudly and bitterly, and Denis joined in their grief. Then came his sisters, who, one by one, hung upon him, and sobbed as if he had been dead. The grief of his youngest sister, Susan, was excessive. She threw her arms about his neck, and said she would not let him go; Denis pressed her to his heart, and the grief which he felt seemed to penetrate his very soul.

"Susan," said he "Susan, may the blessing of God rest upon you till I see you again!" and the affectionate girl was literally torn from his arms.

But now came the most affecting part of the ceremony. His parents had stood apart—their hands locked in each other, both in tears, whilst he took leave of the rest. He now approached his mother, and reverently kneeling down, implored, in words scarcely intelligible, her blessing and forgiveness; he extended both his hands—"Mother," he added, "I ask—humbly and penitently, I ask your blessing; it will be sweet to me from your beloved lips, dear mother;—pardon me if I ever—as I feel I often did—caused you a pang of sorrow by my disobedience and folly. Oh, pardon me—pardon me for all NOW! Bless your son, kindest of mothers, with your best and tenderest blessing!"

She threw herself in his arms, and locking him in her embrace, imprinted every part of his face with kisses. "Oh, Denis," she exclaimed, "there is but one more who will miss you more nor I will—Oh, my darlin' son—our pride—our pride—our heart's pride—our honour, and our credit! Sure, *anim machree*, I have nothin' to forgive you for, my heart's life; but may the blessin' of God and of a happy mother light on you! And, Denis asthore, wasn't it you that made me happy, and that made us all happy! May my blessin' and the blessin' of God rest upon you—keep you from every evil, and in every good, till my eyes will be made glad by lookin' on you agin!"

A grief more deep, and a happiness more full than had yet been felt were now to come forth. Denis turned to his father—his companion in many a pastime, and in many a walk about their native fields. In fair—in market—at mass—and at every rustic amusement within their reach—had he been ever at the side of that indulgent father, whose heart and soul were placed in him.

Denis could not utter a word, but kept his streaming eyes fixed upon the old man, with that yearning expression of the heart which is felt when it desires to be mingled with the very existence of the object that it loves. Old Denis advanced, under powerful struggles to suppress his grief; he knelt, and as the tears ran in silence down his cheeks, thus addressed himself to God:

"I kneel down before you, oh, my God! a poor sinner! I kneel here in your blessed presence, with a heart—with a happy heart—this day, to return you thanks in the name of myself and the beloved partner you have given me through the cares and thrials of this world, to give you our heart's best thanks for graciously permittin' us *to see this day!* It is to you we owe it, good Father of heaven! It is to you we owe

this—an' him—my heart's own son, that kneels before me to be blessed by my own lips! Yes—yes, he is—he *is* the pride of our lives!—He is the mornin' star among us! he was ever a good son; and you know that from the day he was born to this minute he never gave me a sore heart! Take him under your own protection! Oh, bless him as we wish, if it be your holy will to do so!—Bless him and guard him, for my heart's in him: it is—he knows it—everybody knows it; —and if anything was to happen him ——"

He could proceed no further: the idea of losing his son, even in imagination, overpowered him;—he rose, locked him to his breast, and for many minutes the grief of both was loud and vehement.

Denis's uncle now interposed: "The horses," said he, "are at the door, an' time's passin'."

"Och, thrue for you, Barny," said old Denis: "come, acushla, an' let me help you on your horse. We will go on quickly, as we're to meet Father Finnerty at the crass-roads."

Denis then shook hands with them all, not forgetting honest Phadrick Murray, who exclaimed, as he bid him farewell, "Arrah! Misther Denis, aroon, won't you be thinkin' of me now an' thin in the college! Faix, if you always argue as bravely wid the collegians as you did the day you proved me to be an ass, you'll soon be at the head of them!"

"Denis," said the uncle, "your father excuses me in regard of havin' to attend my cattle in the fair to-day. You won't be angry wid me, dear, for lavin' you now, as my road lies this other way. May the blessin' of God and his holy mother keep you till I see you agin! an', Denis, if you'd send me a scrape or two, lettin' me know what a good parish ud be worth; for I intend next spring to go wid little Barny to the Latin."

This Denis promised to do; and after bidding him farewell, he and his friends—some on horseback and numbers on foot—set out on their journey; and as they proceeded through their own neighbourhood, many a crowd was collected to get a sight of *Denis O'Shaughnessy going to Maynooth.*

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It was one day in autumn, after a lapse of about two years, that the following conversation took place between a wealthy grazier from the neighbouring parish and one of our hero's most intimate acquaintances. It is valuable only as it throws light upon Denis's ultimate situation in life, which, after all, was not what our readers might be inclined to expect.

"Why, then, honest man," said Denis's friend, "that's a murdherin' fine dhrove o' bullocks you're bringin' to the fair?"

"Ay!" replied the grazier, "you may say that. I'm thinkin' it wouldn't be asy to aquil them."

"Faix, sure enough. Where wor they fed, wid simmission?"

"Up in Teernahusshogue. Arrah, will you tell me what weddin was that that passed awhile agone?"

"A son of ould Denis O'Shaughnessy's, God be merciful to his sowl!"

"Denis O'Shaughnessy! Is it him they called the 'Pigeon-house'? An' is it possible he's dead?"

"He's dead, nabour, an', in throth, an honest man's dead!"

"As ever broke the world's bread. The Lord make his bed in heaven this day! Hasn't he a son larnin' to be a priest in Maynewth?"

"Ah! *Fahreer gairh!* That's all over."

"Why, is *he* dead, too?"

"Be Gorra, no—but the conthrairy to that. 'Twas *his* weddin' you seen passin' a minute agone."

"Is it the young sogarth's? Musha, bad end to you, man alive, an' spake out. Tell us how that happened? Sowl, it's a quare business, an' him was in Maynewth!"

"Faith, he was so; an' they say there wasn't a man in Maynewth able to tache him. But, passin' that over—you see, the father, ould Denis—an' be Gorra, he was very bright too, till the son *grewn* up, an' drownded him wid the langridges—the father, you see, ould Denis himself, tuck a faver whin the son was near a year in the college, an' it proved too many for him. He died; an' whin young Dinny hard of it, the divil a one of him would stay any longer in Maynewth. He came home like a scarecrow, said he lost his health in it, an' refused to go back. Faith, it was a lucky thing that his father died beforehand, for it would brake his heart. As it was, they had terrible work about it. But ould Denis is never dead while young Denis is livin'. Faix, he was as stiff as they wor stout, an' wouldn't give in; so, afther ever so much wranglin', he got the upper hand by tellin' them that he wasn't able to bear the college at all; an' that if he'd go back to it he'd soon folly his father."

"An' what turned him against the college? Was that thrue?"

"Thrue!—thrue indeed! The same youth was never at a loss for a piece of invintion whin it sarved him. No, the sarra word of thruth at all was in it. He soodhered an' palavered a daughther of Owen Connor's, Susy—all the daughther he has, indeed—before he wint to Maynewth at all, they say. She herself wasn't for marryin' him, in regard of a wow she had; but there's no doubt but he made her fond of him, for he has a tongue that ud make black white, or white black, for that matther. So, be Gorra, he got the wow taken off her by the bishop; she soon recovered her health, for she was dyin' for love of him, an'—you seen their weddin'. It ud be worth your while to go a day's journey to get a sight of her—she's allowed to be the purtiest g'rl that ever was in this part o' the counthry."

"Well! well! It's a quare world. An' is the family all agreeable to it now?"

"Hut! where was the use of houldin' out aginst him? I tell you, he'd make them agreeable to anythink, wanst he tuck it into his head. Indeed, it's he that has the great larnin' all out! Why, now, you'd hardly b'lieve me, when I tell you that he'd prove you to be an ass. in

three minutes: make it as plain as the sun. He would; an' often made an ass o' myself."

"Why, now that I look at you—aren't you Dan Murray's nephew?"

"Phadrick Murray, an' divil a one else, sure enough."

"How is your family, Phadrick? Why, man, you don't know your friends—my name's Cahill."

"Is it Andy Cahill of Phuldhu? Why thin, death alive, Andy, how is every bit of you? Andy, I'm regulatin' everything at this weddin', an' you must turn over your horse till we have a dhrop for ould times. Bless my sowl! sure, I'd know your brother round a corner; an' yourself, too, I ought to know, only that I didn't see you since you wor a slip of a gorsoon. Come away, man, sure thim men o' yours can take care o' the cattle. You'll asily overtake thim."

"Throth, I don't care if I have a glass wid an ould friend. But I hope your whisky won't overtake me, Phadrick."

"The never a fear of it, your father's son has too good a head for that. Ough! man alive, if you could stay for the weddin'! Divil a sich a let out ever was seen in the county widin the mimory of the ouldest man in it, as it 'ill be. Dinis is the boy that ud have the dacent thing or nothin'."

The grazier and Phadrick Murray then bent their steps to Owen Connor's house, where the wedding was held. It is unnecessary to say that Phadrick plied his new acquaintance to some purpose. Ere two hours had elapsed the latter had forgotten his bullocks as completely as if he had never had them, and his drovers were left to their own discretion in effecting their sale. As for Andy Cahill, like many other sapient Irishmen, he preferred his pleasure to his business, got drunk, and danced, and sung at Denis O'Shaughnessy's wedding, which we are bound to say was the longest, the most hospitable, and frolicsome that ever has been remembered in the parish from that day to the present.

PHELIM O'TOOLE'S COURTSHIP.

PHELIM O'TOOLE, who had the honour of being that interesting personage, an only son, was heir to a snug estate of half an acre, which had been the family patrimony since the time of his grandfather, Tyrrell O'Toole, who won it from the *Sassenah* at the point of his reaping-hook, during a descent once made upon England by a body of "spalpeens," in the month of August. This resolute little band was led on by Tyrrell, who, having secured about eight guineas by the excursion, returned to his own country with a coarse linen travelling bag slung across his shoulder, a new hat in one hand, and a staff in the other. On reaching once more his native village of Teernarogarth, he immediately took half an acre, for which he paid a moderate rent in the shape of daily labour as a cottar. On

this he resided until death, after which event he was succeeded by his son, Larry O'Toole, the father of the "purty boy" who is about to shine in the following pages.

Phelim's father and mother had been married near seven years without the happiness of a family. This to both was a great affliction. Sheelah O'Toole was melancholy from night to morning, and Larry was melancholy from morning to night. Their cottage was silent and solitary; the floor and furniture had not the appearance of any cottage in which Irish children are wont to amuse themselves. When they rose in the morning a miserable stillness prevailed around them; young voices were not heard—laughing eyes turned not on their parents—the melody of angry squabbles, as the urchins, in their parent's fancy, cuffed and scratched each other—half, or wholly naked among the ashes in the morning, soothed not the yearning hearts of Larry and his wife. No, no; there was none of this. Morning passed in a quietness hard to be borne: noon arrived, but the dismal, dreary sense of childlessness hung upon the house of their hearts: night again returned, only to add its darkness to that which overshadowed the sorrowful spirits of this disconsolate couple.

For the first two or three years they bore this privation with a strong confidence that it would not last. The heart, however, sometimes becomes tired of hoping, or unable to bear the burthen of expectation, which time only renders heavier. They first began to fret and pine, then to murmur, and finally to recriminate.

Sheelah wished for children, "to have the crathurs to spake to," she said, "and comfort us when we'd get ould an' helpless."

Larry cared not, provided they had a son to inherit the "half acre." This was the burthen of his wishes, for in all their altercations his closing observation usually was—"Well, but what's to become of the half acre?"

"What's to become of the half acre? Arrah, What do I care for the half acre? It's not that you ought to be thinkin' of, but the dismal poor house we have, wid not the laugh or schreech of a single *pastiah*[1] in it from year's end to year's end."

"Well, Sheelah?"

"Well yourself, Larry? To the *diouol* I pitch your half acre, man."

"To the *diouol* you pitch—What do you fly at me for?"

"Who's flyin' at you? They'd have little tow on their rock that ud fly at *you*."

"You are flyin' at me; an' only you have a hard face you wouldn't do it."

"A hard face! Indeed it's well come over wid us, to be tould that by the likes o' you! ha!"

"No matther for that! You had betther keep a soft tongue in your head, an' a civil one, in the manetime. Why did the devil timpt you to take a fancy to me at all?"

[1] A child

"That's it. Throw the *grah* an' love I *once* had for you in my teeth now. It's a manly thing for you to do, an' you may be proud of it. Dear knows it would be betther for me I had fell in consate wid any face but yours."

"I wish to goodness you had! I wouldn't be as I am to-day. There's that half acre ——"

"To the *diouol*, I say, I pitch yourself an' your half acre! Why do you be comin' acrass me wid your half acre? Eh? Why do you?"

"Come, now; don't be puttin' your hands again your sides an' waggin' your impty head at me, like a rockin' stone."

"An' why do you be aggravatin' at me wid your half acre?"

"Bekase I have a good right to do it. What'll become of it when I d——"

"That for you an' it, you poor excuse!"

"When I di——"

"That for you an' it, I say! That for you an' it, you atomy!"

"What will become of my half acre when I die? Did you hear *that?*"

"You ought to think of what'll become of yourself when you die; that's what you ought to think of; but little it throubles you, you sinful reprobate! Sure the neighbours despises you."

"That's a falsity; but they know the life I lade wid *you*. The edge of your tongue's well known. They pity me for bein' joined to the likes of you. Your bad tongue's all you're good for."

"Aren't you afeard to be flyin' in the face o' Providence the way you are? An' to be ladin' me sich a heart-scalded life for no rason?"

"It's your own story you're tellin'. Sure I haven't a day's pace wid you, or ever had these three years. But wait till next harvest, an' if I'm spared I'll go to England. Whin I do, I've a consate in my head that you'll never see my face agin."

"Oh, you know that's an' ould story wid you. Many a time you threatened us wid that afore. Who knows but you'd be dhrownded on your way, an' thin we'd get another husband."

"An' be these blessed tongs I'll do it afore I'm much ouldher!"

"An' lave me here to starve an' sthruggle by myself! Desart me like a villain, to poverty an' hardship! Marciful Mother of Heaven, look down upon me this day! but I'm the ill-thrated an' ill-used poor crathur, by a man that I don't, an' never did, desarve it from! An' all in regard that that 'half acre' must go to strangers! Och! oh!"

"Ay! now take to the cryin', do; rock yourself over the ashes, an' wipe your eyes wid the corner of your apron; but I say agin, *what's to become of the half acre?*"

"Oh, God forgive you, Larry! That's the worst I say to you, you poor half-dead blackguard!"

"Why do you massacray me wid your tongue as you do?"

"Go an—go an. I won't make you an answer, you atomy! That's what I'll do. The heavens above turn your heart this day, and give me strinth to bear my throubles an' heart-burnin', sweet queen o' consolation! Or take me into the arms of Parodies, sooner nor be as I

am, wid a poor baste of a villain, that I never turn my tongue on, barrin' to tell him the kind of a man he is, the blackguard!"

"You're betther than you desarve to be!"

To this Sheelah made no further reply; on the contrary, she sat smoking her pipe with a significant silence, that was only broken by an occasional groan, an ejaculation, or a singularly devout upturning of the eyes to heaven, accompanied by a shake of the head, at once condemnatory and philosophical; indicative of her dissent from what he said, as well as of her patience in bearing it.

Larry, however, usually proceeded to combat all her gestures by *viva voce* argument; for every shake of her head he had an appropriate answer, but without being able to move her from the obstinate silence she maintained. Having thus the field to himself, and feeling rather annoyed by the want of an antagonist, he argued on in the same form of dispute, whilst she, after first calming her own spirit by the composing effects of the pipe, usually cut him short with:

"Here, take a blast o' this, maybe it'll settle you."

This was received in silence. The good man smoked on, and every puff appeared as an evaporation of his anger. In due time he was as placid as herself, drew his breath in a grave, composed manner, laid his pipe quietly on the hob, and went about his business as if nothing had occurred between them.

These bickerings were strictly private, with the exception of some disclosures made to Sheelah's mother and sisters. Even these were thrown out rather as insinuations that all was not right than as direct assertions that they lived unhappily. Before strangers they were perfect turtles.

Larry, according to the notices of his life furnished by Sheelah, was "as good a husband as ever broke the world's bread;" and Sheelah "was as good a poor man's wife as ever threw a gown over her shoulders." Notwithstanding all this caution, their little quarrels took wind, their unhappiness became known. Larry, in consequence of a failing he had, was the cause of this. He happened to be one of those men who can conceal nothing when in a state of intoxication. Whenever he indulged in liquor too freely, the veil which discretion had drawn over their recriminations was put aside, and a dolorous history of their weaknesses, doubts, hopes, and wishes most unscrupulously given to every person on whom the complainant could fasten. When sober he had no recollection of this, so that many a conversation of cross-purposes took place between him and his neighbours with reference to the state of his domestic inquietude and their want of children.

One day a poor mendicant came in at dinner hour, and stood as if to solicit alms. It is customary in Ireland, when any person of that description appears during meal-times, to make him wait until the meal is over, after which he is supplied with the fragments. No sooner had the *boccagh*—as a certain class of beggars is termed—advanced past the jamb than he was desired to sit until the dinner should be concluded. Meantime, with the tact of an adept in his

calling, he began to ingratiate himself with Larry and his wife ; and after sounding the simple couple upon their private history, he discovered that want of children was the occasion of their unhappiness.

"Well, good people," said the pilgrim, after listening to a dismal story on the subject, "don't be cast down, sure, whether or not. There's a holy well that I can direct yees to in the county ——. Anyone, wid trust in the saint that's over it, who'll make a pilgrimage to it on the patthern day won't be the worse for it. When you go there," he added, "jist turn to a lucky stone that's at the side of the well, say a rosary before it, and at the end of every dicken (decade) kiss it once, ache of you. Then you're to go round the well nine times upon your bare knees, sayin' your pathers and aves all the time. When that's over, lave a ribbon or a bit of your dress behind you, or somethin' by way of an offerin', thin go into a tent an' refresh yourselves, an', for that matther, take a dance or two ; come home, live happily, an' trust to the holy saint for the rest."

A gleam of newly-awakened hope might be discovered lurking in the eyes of this simple pair, who felt those natural yearnings of heart incident to such as are without offspring.

They looked forward with deep anxiety to the anniversary of the patron saint ; and when it arrived, none certainly who attended it felt a more absorbing interest in the success of the pilgrimage than they did.

The days on which these pilgrimages are performed at such places are called pattern or patron days. The journey to holy wells or holy lakes is termed a pilgrimage, or more commonly a station. It is sometimes enjoined by the priest as an act of penance, and sometimes undertaken voluntarily as a devotional work of great merit in the sight of God. The crowds in many places amount to from five hundred to a thousand, and often to two, three, four, or ten thousand people.

These stations have, for the most part, been placed in situations remarkable for wild and savage grandeur, or for soft, exquisite, and generally solitary beauty. They may be found on the high and rugged mountain top, or sunk in the bottom of some still and lonely glen, far removed from the ceaseless din of the world. Immediately beside them, or close in their vicinity, stand the ruins of, probably, a picturesque old abbey, or perhaps a modern chapel. The appearance of these grey, ivy-covered walls is strongly calculated to stir up in the minds of the people the memory of by-gone times, when their religion, with its imposing solemnities, was the religion of the land. It is for this reason, probably, that patrons are countenanced : for if there be not a political object in keeping them up, it is beyond human ingenuity to conceive how either religion or morals can be improved by debauchery, drunkenness, and bloodshed.

Let the reader, in order to understand the situation of the place we are describing, imagine to himself a stupendous cliff overhanging a

green glen, into which tumbles a silver stream down a height of two or three hundred feet. At the bottom of this rock, a few yards from the basin formed by the cascade, in a sunless nook, was a well of cool, delicious water. This was the "holy well," out of which issued a slender stream that joined the rivulet formed by the cascade. On the shrubs which grew out of the crag-cliffs around it might be seen innumerable rags bleached by the weather out of their original colour, small wooden crosses, locks of human hair, buttons, and other substitutes for property, poverty allowing the people to offer it only by fictitious emblems. Lower down in the glen, on the river's bank, was a smooth green, admirably adapted for the dance, which, notwithstanding the religious rites, is the heart and soul of a patron.

On that morning a vast influx of persons, male and female, old and young, married and single, crowded eagerly towards the well. Among them might be noticed the blind, the lame, the paralytic, and such as were afflicted with various other diseases; nor were those good men who had no offspring to be omitted. The mendicant, the pilgrim, the boccagh, together with every other description of impostors remarkable for attending such places, were the first on the ground, all busy in their respective vocations. The highways, the fields, and the *boreens*, or bridle-roads, were filled with living streams of people pressing forward to this great scene of fun and religion. The devotees could in general be distinguished from the country folks by their Pharisaical and penitential visages, as well as by their not wearing shoes, for the stations to such places were formerly made with bare feet: most persons now, however, content themselves with stripping off their shoes and stockings on coming within the precincts of the holy ground. Human beings are not the only description of animals that perform pilgrimages to holy wells and blessed lakes. Cows, horses, and sheep are made to go through their duties, either by way of prevention or cure of the diseases incident to them. This is not to be wondered at, when it is known that every domestic animal has its patron saint, to whom its owner may at any time pray on its behalf.

When the crowd was collected, nothing in the shape of an assembly could surpass it in the originality of its appearance. In the glen were constructed a number of tents, where whisky and refreshments might be had in abundance. Every tent had a fiddler or a piper; many two of them. From the top of a pole that ran up from the roof of each tent was suspended the symbol by which the owner of it was known by his friends and acquaintances. Here swung a salt herring or a turf, there a shillelah, in a third place a shoe, in a fourth place a wisp of hay, in a fifth an old hat, and so on with the rest.

The tents stood at a short distance from the scene of devotion at the well, but not so far as to prevent the spectator from both seeing and hearing what went on in each. Around the well, on bare knees, moved a body of people, thickly wedged together, some praying, some screaming, some excoriating their neighbour's shins, and others dragging them out of their way by the hair of the head. Exclamations of pain from the sick or lame, thumping oaths in Irish, recriminations in

broken English, and prayers in bog Latin, all rose at once to the ears of the patron saint, who, we are inclined to think—could he have heard or seen his worshippers—would have disclaimed them altogether.

"For the sake of the Holy Virgin, keep your sharp elbows out o' my ribs."

"My blessin' an you, young man, an' don't be lanin' an me, if you plase!"

"*Damnho sheery orth, a rogarah Ruah!* what do you mane? Is it my back you're brakin'?"

"Hell purshue you, you ould sinner; can't you keep the spike of your crutch out o' my stomach! If you love me tell me so; but, by the livin' farmer, I'll take no such hints as that!"

"*I'm* a pilgrim, an' don't brake my leg upon the rock, an' my blessin' an you!"

"Oh, murdher sheery! my poor child 'ill be smodhered!"

"My heart's curse an you! is it the ould cripple you're thrampin' over?"

"Here, Barny, blood alive, give this purty young girl a lift, your sowl, or she'll be undhermost!"

"'Och, 'twas on a Christmas mornin'
That Jeeroosillim was born in
The Holy Land ——'

Oh, my neck's broke!—the curse—Oh! I'm kilt fairly, so I am! The curse o' Cromwell an you, an' hould away ——

'The Holy Land adornin
All by the Baltic Say.
Three angels on a station,
All in deep meditation,
Wor takin' raycrayation,
All by the ——'

contints o' the book, if you don't hould away, I say agin, an' let me go an wid my *rann*, it'll be worse for you!——

'Wor takin' raycrayation,
All by the Baltic Say!!'"

"Help the ould woman there."

"Queen o' patriots, pray for us!—St. Abraham——go to the divil, you bosthoon; is it crushin' my sore leg you are?—St. Abraham pray for us! St. Isinglass, pray for us! St. Jonathan—musha, I wisht you wor in America, honest man, instid o' twistin' my arm like a *gad!*—St. Jonathan, pray for us! Holy Nineveh, look down upon us wid compression an' resolution this day! Blessed Jerooslim, throw down compuncture an' meditation upon us Chrystyeens assembled here afore you to offer up our sins! Oh, grant us, blessed Catasthrophy, the holy virtues of timptation an' solitude, through the improvement an' accommodation of St. Kolumbkill! To him I offer up this button, a bit o' the waistband o' my own breeches, an' a taste of my wife's petticoat, in remimbrance of us havin' made this

holy station ; an' may they rise up in glory to prove it for us at the last day ! Amin !"

Such was the character of the prayers and ejaculations which issued from the lips of the motley group that scrambled, and crushed, and screamed on their knees around the well. In the midst of this ignorance and absurdity there were visible, however, many instances of apparent piety, goodness of heart, and simplicity of character. From such you could hear neither oath nor exclamation. They complied with the usages of the place modestly and attentively ; though not insensible, at the same time, to the strong disgust which the general conduct of those who were both superstitious and wicked was calculated to excite. A little from the well, just where its waters mingled with those of the cascade, men and women might be seen washing the blood off their knees, and dipping such parts of their body as were afflicted with local complaints into the stream. This part of the ceremony was anything but agreeable to the eye. Most of those who went round the well drank its waters ; and several of them filled flasks and bottles with it, which they brought home for the benefit of such members of their family as could not attend in person.

Whilst all this went forward at the well, scenes of a different kind were enacted lower down among the tents. No sooner had the penitents got the difficult rites of the station over than they were off to the whisky ; and decidedly, after the grinding of their bare knees upon the hard rock—after the pushing, crushing, and exhaustion of bodily strength which they had been forced to undergo—we say that the comforts and refreshments to be had in the tents were very seasonable. Here the dancing, shouting, singing, courting, drinking, and fighting formed one wild uproar of noise that was perfectly astounding. The leading boys and the prettiest girls of the parish were all present, partaking in the rustic revelry. Tipsy men were staggering in every direction ; fiddles were playing, pipes were squeaking, men were rushing in detached bodies to some fight, women were doctoring the heads of such as had been beaten, and factions were collecting their friends for a fresh battle. Here you might see a grove of shillelahs up, and hear the crash of the onset ; and in another place, the heads of the dancing parties bobbing up and down in brisk motion among the crowd that surrounded them. The pilgrim, having now gone through his station, stood hemmed in by a circle of those who wanted to purchase his beads or his scapulars. The ballad-singer had his own mob, from among whom his voice might be heard rising in its purest tones to the praise of

> "Brave O'Connell, the Liberathur,
> An' great Salvathur of Ireland's Isle !"

As evening approached, the whisky brought out the senseless prejudices of parties and factions in a manner quite consonant to the habits of the people. Those who, in deciding their private quarrels, had in the early part of the day beat and abused each other, now united as the subordinate branches of a greater party for the purpose

of opposing in one general body some other hostile faction. These fights are usually commenced by a challenge from one party to another, in which a person from the opposite side is simply and often very good-humouredly invited to assert that "black is the white of his enemy's eye," or to touch the old coat which he is pleased to trail after him between the two opposing powers. This characteristic challenge is soon accepted; the knocking down and yelling are heard; stones fly, and every available weapon is pressed into the service on both sides. In this manner the battle proceeds, until, probably, a life or two is lost. Bones, too, are savagely broken, and blood copiously spilled, by men who scarcely know the remote cause of the enmity between the parties.

Such is a hasty sketch of the Pattern, as it is called in Ireland, at which Larry and Sheelah duly performed their station. We, for our parts, should be sorry to see the innocent pastimes of a people abolished; but surely customs which perpetuate scenes of profligacy and crime should not be suffered to stain the pure and holy character of religion.

It is scarcely necessary to inform our readers that Larry O'Toole and Sheelah complied with every rite of the station. To kiss the "Lucky Stone," however, was their principal duty. Larry gave it a particularly honest smack, and Sheelah impressed it with all the ardour of a devotee. Having refreshed themselves in the tent, they returned home, and in somewhat less than a year from that period found themselves the happy parents of an heir to the half acre, no less a personage than young Phelim, who was called after St. Phelim, the patron of the "Lucky Stone."

The reader perceives that Phelim was born under particularly auspicious influence. His face was the herald of affection everywhere. From the moment of his birth Larry and Sheelah were seldom known to have a dispute. Their whole future life was, with few exceptions, one unchanging honeymoon. Had Phelim been deficient in comeliness, it would have mattered not a *crona baun*. Phelim, on the contrary, promised to be a beauty; both his parents thought it, felt it, asserted it; and who had a better right to be acquainted, as Larry said, "wid the outs an' ins, the ups an' downs, of his face, the darlin' swaddy!"

For the first ten years of his life Phelim could not be said to owe the tailor much; nor could the covering which he wore be, without more antiquarian lore than we can give to it, exactly classed under any particular term by which the various parts of human dress are known. He himself, like some of our great poets, was externally well acquainted with the elements. The sun and he were particularly intimate; wind and rain were his brothers, and frost also distantly related to him. With mud he was hand and glove, and not a bog in the parish, or a quagmire in the neighbourhood, but sprung up under Phelim's tread, and threw him forward with the brisk vibration of an old acquaintance. Touching his dress, however, in the early part of life, if he was clothed with nothing else, he was clothed with mystery.

Some assert that a cast-off pair of his father's nether garments might be seen upon him each Sunday, the wrong side foremost, in accommodation with some economy of his mother's, who thought it safest, in consequence of his habits, to join them in this inverted way to a cape which he wore on his shoulders. We ourselves have seen one who saw another who saw Phelim in a pair of stockings which covered him from his knee-pans to his haunches, where, in the absence of waistbands, they made a pause—a breach existing from that to the small of his back. The person who saw all this affirmed, at the same time, that there was a dearth of cloth about the skirts of the integument which stood him instead of a coat. He bore no bad resemblance, he said, to a moulting fowl, with scanty feathers, running before a gale in the farm-yard.

Phelim's want of dress in his merely boyish years being, in a great measure, the national costume of some hundred thousand young Hibernians in his rank of life, deserves a still more particular notice. His infancy we pass over ; but from the period at which he did *not* enter into small-clothes, he might be seen every Sunday morning, or on some important festival, issuing from his father's mansion, with a piece of old cloth tied about him from the middle to the knees, leaving a pair of legs visible that were mottled over with characters which would, if found on an Egyptian pillar, put an antiquary to the necessity of constructing a new alphabet to decipher them. This, or the inverted breeches, with his father's flannel waistcoat, or an old coat that swept the ground at least two feet behind him, constituted his state dress. On week days he threw off this finery, and contented himself, if the season were summer, with appearing in a dun-coloured shirt, which resembled a noun-substantive, for it could stand alone. The absence of soap and water is sometimes used as a substitute for milling linen among the lower Irish ; and so effectually had Phelim's single change been milled in this manner, that, when disenshirting at night, he usually laid it standing at his bedside, where it reminded one of frosted linen in everything but whiteness.

This, with but little variation, was Phelim's dress until his tenth year. Long before that, however, he evinced those powers of attraction which constituted so remarkable a feature in his character. He won all hearts ; the chickens and ducks were devotedly attached to him ; the cow, which the family always *intended* to buy, was in the habit of licking Phelim in his dreams ; the two goats, which they actually did buy, treated him like one of themselves. Among the first and last he spent a great deal of his early life ; for as the floor of his father's house was but a continuation of the dunghill, or the dunghill a continuation of the floor, we know not rightly which, he had a larger scope and a more unsavoury pool than usual for amusement. Their dunghill, indeed, was the finest of its size and kind to be seen ; quite a tasteful thing, and so convenient that he could lay himself down at the hearth and roll out to its foot, after which he ascended it on his legs with all the elasticity of a young poet triumphantly climbing Parnassus.

One of the greatest wants which Phelim experienced in his young days was the want of a capacious pocket. We insinuate nothing; because with respect to his agility in climbing fruit trees, it was only a species of exercise to which he was addicted—the eating and carrying away of the fruit being merely incidental, or, probably, the result of abstraction, which, as everyone knows, proves what is termed "the absence of genius." In these ambitious exploits, however, there is no denying that he often bitterly regretted the want of a pocket; and in connection with this we have only to add that most of his solitary walks were taken about orchards and gardens, the contents of which he has been seen to contemplate with interest. This, to be sure, might proceed from a provident regard to health, for it is a well-known fact that he has frequently returned home in the evenings distended like a boa constrictor after a gorge; yet no person was ever able to come at the cause of his inflation. There were, to be sure, suspicions abroad, and it was mostly found that depredations in some neighbouring orchard or garden had been committed a little before the periods in which it was supposed the distension took place. We mention these things, after the example of those "d——d good-natured" biographers who write great men's lives of late, only for the purpose of showing that there could be no truth in such suspicions. Phelim, we assure an enlightened public, was voraciously fond of fruit; he was frequently inflated too, after the manner of those who indulge therein to excess; fruit was always missed immediately after the periods of his distension, so that it was impossible *he* could have been concerned in the depredations then made upon the neighbouring orchards. In addition to this, we would beg modestly to add that the pomonian temperament is incompatible with the other qualities for which he was famous. His parents were too ignorant of those little eccentricities, which, had they known them, would have opened up a correct view of the splendid materials for village greatness which he possessed, and which, probably, were nipped in their bud for the want of a pocket to his breeches, or rather by the want of breeches to his pocket, for such was the wayward energy of his disposition that he ultimately succeeded in getting the latter, though it certainly often failed him to procure the breeches. In fact, it was a misfortune to him that he was the son of his father and mother at all. Had he been a second Melchizedec, and got into breeches in time, the virtues which circumstances suppressed in his heart might have flourished like cauliflowers, though the world would have lost all the advantages arising from the splendour of his talents at going naked.

Another fact, in justice to his character, must not be omitted. His penchant for fruit was generally known; but few persons, at the period we are describing, were at all aware that a love of whisky lurked as a predominant trait in his character, to be brought out at a future era in his life.

Before Phelim reached his tenth year he and his parents had commenced hostilities. Many were their efforts to subdue some peculiarities of his temper which then began to appear. Phelim, however,

being an only son, possessed high vantage ground. Along with other small matters which he was in the habit of picking up might be reckoned a readiness at swearing. Several other things also made their appearance in his parents' cottage, for whose presence there, except through his instrumentality, they found it rather difficult to account. Spades, shovels, rakes, tubs, frying-pans, and many other articles of domestic use were transferred, as if by magic, to Larry's cabin.

As Larry and his wife were both honest, these things were, of course, restored to their owners, the moment they could be ascertained. Still, although this honest couple's integrity was known, there were many significant looks turned upon Phelim, and many spirited prophecies uttered with especial reference to him, all of which hinted at the probability of his dying something in the shape of a perpendicular death. This habit, then, of adding to their furniture was one cause of the hostility between him and his parents; we say one, for there were at least a good round dozen besides. His touch, for instance, was fatal to crockery; he stripped his father's Sunday clothes of their buttons with great secrecy and skill; he was a dead shot at the panes of his neighbours' windows, a perfect necromancer at sucking eggs through pin-holes, took great delight in calling home the neighbouring farmers' workmen to dinner an hour before it was ready; and was, in fact, a perfect master in many other ingenious manifestations of character ere he reached his twelfth year.

Now it was about this period that the small-pox made its appearance in the village. Indescribable was the dismay of Phelim's parents lest he among others might become a victim to it. Vaccination had not then surmounted the prejudices with which every discovery beneficial to mankind is at first met; and the people were left principally to the imposture of quacks, or the cunning of certain persons called "fairy men," or "sonsie women." Nothing remained now but that this formidable disease should be met by all the power and resources of superstition. The first thing the mother did was to get a gospel consecrated by the priest, for the purpose of guarding Phelim against evil. What is termed a gospel, and worn as a kind of charm about the person, is simply a slip of paper on which are written by the priest the first few verses of the Gospel of St. John. This, however, being worn for no specific purpose, was incapable of satisfying the honest woman. Superstition had its own peculiar remedy for the small-pox, and Sheelah was resolved to apply it. Accordingly she borrowed a neighbour's ass, drove it home, with Phelim, however, on its back, took the interesting youth by the nape of the neck, and in the name of the Trinity shoved him three times under it, and three times over it. She then put a bit of bread into its mouth, until the ass had mumbled it a little, after which she gave the savoury morsel to Phelim as a *bonne bouche*. This was one preventive against the small-pox; but another was to be tried.

She next clipped off the extremities of Phelim's elf-locks, tied them in linen that was never bleached, and hung them beside the gospel

about his neck. This was her second cure ; but there was still a third to be applied. She got the largest onion possible, which, having cut it into nine parts, she hung from the roof tree of the cabin, having first put the separated parts together. It is supposed that this has the power of drawing infection of any kind to itself. It is permitted to remain untouched until the disease has passed from the neighbourhood, when it is buried as far down in the earth as a single man can dig. This was a third cure , but there was still a fourth. She borrowed ten asses' halters from her neighbours, who, on hearing that they were for Phelim's use, felt particular pleasure in obliging her. Having procured these, she pointed them one by one at Phelim's neck, until the number nine was completed. The tenth she put on him, and with the end of it in her hand, led him like an ass, nine mornings before sunrise, to a south-running stream, which he was obliged to cross. On doing this, two conditions were to be fulfilled on the part of Phelim ; he was bound, in the first place, to keep his mouth filled, during the ceremony, with a certain fluid which must be nameless ; in the next, to be silent from the moment he left home until his return.

Sheelah, having satisfied herself that everything calculated to save her darling from the small-pox was done, felt considerably relieved, and hoped that, whoever might be infected, Phelim would escape. On the morning when the last journey to the river had been completed, she despatched him home with the halters. Phelim, however, wended his way to a little hazle copse below the house, where he deliberately twined the halters together, and erected a swing-swang, with which he amused himself till hunger brought him to his dinner.

"Phelim, you idle thief, what kep you away till now?"

"Oh, mudher, mudher, gi' me a piece o' *arran*" (bread).

"Why, here's the praties done for your dinner. What kep you?"

"Oh, be gorra, it's well you ever see me at all, so it is?"

"Why," said his father, "what happened you?"

"Oh, bedad, a terrible thing all out. As I was crassin' Dunroe Hill, I thramped on *hungry grass*. First I didn't know what kem over me, I got so wake ; and every step I wint, 'twas waker an' waker I was growin', till at long last down I dhrops, and couldn't move hand or fut. I dunna how long I lay there, so I don't ; but, anyhow, who should be *sthreelin'* across the hill but an ould *boccagh*.

"'My *bouchaleen dhas*,' says he—'my beautiful boy,' says he—'you're in a bad state I find. You've thramped upon Dunroe *hungry grass*, an' only for somethin' it's a *prabeen* you'd be, afore ever you'd see home. Can you spake at all?' says he.

"'Oh, murdher,' says I, 'I b'lieve not.'

"'Well, here,' says the *boccagh*, 'open your purty *gub*, an' take in a thrifle of this male, an' you'll soon be stout enough.' Well, to be sure, it bates the world! I had hardly tasted the male, whin I found myself as well as ever ; bekase, you know, mudher, that's the cure for it. 'Now,' says the *boccagh*, 'this is the spot the fairies planted their hungry grass an, so you'll know it agin when you see it. What's your name?' says he.

"'Phelim O'Toole,' says I.

"'Well,' says he, 'go home an' tell your father an' mother to offer up a prayer to St. Phelim, your namesake, in regard that only for him you'd be a *corp* before any relief would a come near you; or, at any rate, wid the fairies.'"

The father and mother, although with a thousand proofs before them that Phelim, so long as he could at all contrive a lie, would never speak truth, yet were so blind to his well-known propensity that they always believed the lie to be truth until they discovered it to be a falsehood. When he related a story, for instance, which carried not only improbability, but impossibility, on the face of it, they never questioned his veracity. The neighbours, to be sure, were vexed and nettled at the obstinacy of their credulity; especially on reflecting that they were as sceptical in giving credence to the narrative of any other person as all rational people ought to be. The manner of training up Phelim, and Phelim's method of governing them, had become a by-word in the village. "Take a sthraw to him, like Sheelah O'Toole," was often ironically said to mothers remarkable for mischievous indulgence to their children.

The following day proved that no charm could protect Phelim from the small-pox. Every symptom of that disease became quite evident; and the grief of his doting parents amounted to distraction. Neither of them could be declared perfectly sane; they knew not how to proceed—what regimen to adopt for him, nor what remedies to use. A week elapsed, but each succeeding day found him in a more dangerous state. At length, by the advice of some of the neighbours, an old crone called "Sonsy Mary" was called in to administer relief through the medium of certain powers which were thought to be derived from something holy and also supernatural. She brought a mysterious bottle, of which he was to take every third spoonful three times a day; it was to be administered by the hand of a young girl of virgin innocence, who was also to breathe three times down his throat, holding his nostrils closed with her fingers. The father and mother were to repeat a certain number of prayers, to promise against swearing, and to kiss the hearthstone nine times—the one turned north, and the other south. All these ceremonies were performed with care, but Phelim's malady appeared to set them at defiance; and the old crone would have lost her character in consequence, were it not that Larry, on the day of the cure, after having promised not to swear, let fly an oath at a hen whose cackling disturbed Phelim. This saved her character, and threw Larry and Sheelah into fresh despair.

They had nothing now for it but the "fairy man," to whom, despite the awful mystery of his character, they resolved to apply rather than see their only son taken from them for ever. Larry proceeded without delay to the wise man's residence, after putting a small phial of holy water in his pocket to protect himself from fairy influence. The house in which this person lived was admirably in accordance with his mysterious character. One gable of it was formed by the mound of a fairy Rath, against which the cabin stood endwise; within a mile

there was no other building ; the country around it was a sheep-walk, green, and beautifully interspersed with two or three solitary glens, in one of which might be seen a cave, that was said to communicate under ground with the rath. A ridge of high peaked mountains ran above it, whose evening shadow, in consequence of their form, fell down on each side of the rath, without obscuring its precincts. It lay south, and such was the power of superstition, that during summer the district in which it stood was thought to be covered with a light and silence decidedly supernatural. In spring it was the first to be in verdure, and in autumn the last. Nay, in winter itself the rath and the adjoining valleys never ceased to be green. These circumstances were not attributed to the nature of the soil—to its southern situation, nor to the fact of its being pasture land—but simply to the power of the fairies, who were supposed to keep its verdure fresh for their own revels.

When Larry entered the house, which had an air of comfort and snugness beyond the common, a tall thin pike of a man, about sixty years of age, stood before him. He wore a brown great-coat that fell far short of his knees ; his small-clothes were closely fitted to thighs not thicker than hand telescopes; on his legs were drawn grey woollen stockings, rolled up about six inches over his small-clothes ; his head was covered by a bay bob wig, on which was a little round hat, with the edge of the leaf turned up in every direction. His face was short and sallow, his chin peaked, his nose small and turned up. If we add to this a pair of skeleton-like hands and arms projecting about eight inches beyond the sleeves of his coat, two fiery ferret-eyes, and a long, small hollow wand, higher than himself, we have the outline of this singular figure.

"God save you, nabour," said Larry.

"Save you, save you, nabour," he replied, without pronouncing the name of the deity.

"This is a thryin' time," said Larry, "to them that has childhre."

The fairy man fastened his red glittering eyes upon him with a sinister glance that occasioned Larry to feel rather uncomfortable.

"So you venthured to come to the fairy man?"

"It is about our son, an' he all we ha——"

"Whisht!" said the man, waving his hand with a commanding air. "Whisht ; I wish you wor out o' this, for it's a bad time to be here. Listen ! Listen ! Do you hear nothing?"

Larry changed colour. "I do," he replied—"the Lord protect me ! Is that *them?*"

"What did you hear?" said the man.

"Why," returned the other, "I heard the bushes of the rath all movin', jist as if a blast o' wind came among them !"

"Whisht," said the fairy man, "they're here; you mustn't open your lips while you're in the house. I know what you want, an' will see your son. Do you hear anything more? If you do, lay your forefinger along your nose : but don't spake."

Larry heard, with astonishment, the music of a pair of bagpipes.

The tune played was one which, according to a popular legend, was first played by Satan ; it is called "Go to the Devil and shake yourself." To our own knowledge the peasantry in certain parts of Ireland refuse to sing it for the above reason. The mystery of the music was heightened, too, by the fact of its being played, as Larry thought, behind the gable of the cabin, which stood against the side of the rath, out of which, indeed, it seemed to proceed.

Larry laid his finger along his nose, as he had been desired ; and this appearing to satisfy the fairy man, he waved his hand to the door, thus intimating that his visitor should depart ; which he did immediately, but not without observing that this wild-looking being closed and bolted the door after him.

It is unnecessary to say that he was rather anxious to get off the premises of the good people ; he therefore lost little time until he arrived at his own cabin ; but judge of his wonder when, on entering it, he found the long-legged spectre awaiting his return.

"*Bonaght dhea orriu!*" he exclaimed, starting back ; "the blessin' o' God be upon us ! Is it here before me you are?"

"Hould your tongue, man," said the other, with a smile of mysterious triumph. "Is it that you wondher at? Ha, ha ! That's little of it !"

"But how did you know my name? or who I was? or where I lived at all? Heaven protect us! It's beyant belief, clane out."

"Hould your tongue," replied the man, "don't be axin' me anything o' the kind. Clear out, both of yees, till I begin my *pisthrogues* wid the sick child. Clear out, I say."

With some degree of apprehension Larry and Sheelah left the house as they had been ordered, and the fairy man, having pulled out a flask of poteen, administered a dose of it to Phelim ; and never yet did patient receive his medicine with such a relish. He licked his lips, and fixed his eye upon it with a longing look.

"Be gorra," said he, "that's fine stuff entirely. Will you lave me the bottle?"

"No," said the fairy man, "but I'll call an' give you a little of it wanst a day."

"Ay, do," replied Phelim ; "the divil a fear o' me, if I get enough of it. I hope I'll see you often."

The fairy man kept his word ; so that what with his bottle, a hardy constitution, and light bed-clothes, Phelim got the upper hand of his malady. In a month he was again on his legs ; but, alas ! his complexion, though not changed to deformity, was woefully out of joint. His principal blemish, in addition to the usual marks left by this complaint, consisted in a drooping of his left eyelid, which gave to his whole face a cast highly ludicrous.

When Phelim felt thoroughly recovered, he claimed a pair of "leather crackers," a hareskin cap and a coat, with a pertinacity which kept the worthy couple in a state of inquietude until they complied with his importunity. Henceforth he began to have everything his own way. His parents, sufficiently thankful that he was spared to them, resolved to thwart him no more.

"It's well we have him at all," said his mother; "sure, if we hadn't him, we'd be breakin' our hearts, and sayin' if it ud plase God to send him back to us, that we'd be happy even wid givin' him his own way."

"They say it breaks their strinth, too," replied his father, "to be crubbin' them in too much, an' snappin' at thim for every hand's turn, an' I'm sure it does too."

"Doesn't he become the pock-marks well, the crathur?" said the mother.

"Become!" said the father; "but doesn't the droop in his eye set him off all to pieces!"

"Ay," observed the mother, "an' how the crathur went round among all the neighbours to show them the 'leather crackers'! To see his little pride out o' the hareskin cap, too, wid the hare's ears stickin' out of his temples. That, an' the droopin' eye undher them, makes him look so cunnin' an' ginteel that one can't help havin' their heart fixed upon him."

"He'd look betther still if that ould coat wasn't sweepin' the ground behind him; an' what ud you think to put a pair o' *martyeens* on his legs to hide the mazles? He might go anywhere thin."

"Throth he might; but, Larry, what in the world wide could be in the fairy man's bottle that Phelim took sich a likin' for it? He tould me this mornin' that he'd suffer to have the pock agin, set in case he was cured wid the same bottle."

"Well, the heaven be praised, anyhow, that we have a son for the half-acre, Sheelah."

"Amin! An' let us take good care of him, now that he's spared to us."

Phelim's appetite after his recovery was anything but a joke to his father. He was now seldom at home, except during meal times; wherever fun or novelty was to be found, Phelim was present. He became a regular attendant upon all the sportsmen. To such he made himself very useful by his correct knowledge of the best covers for game, and the best pools for fish. He was acquainted with every rood of land in the parish; knew with astonishing accuracy where coveys were to be sprung and hares started. No hunt was without him; such was his wind and speed of foot that to follow a chase, and keep up with the horsemen, was to him only a matter of sport. When daylight passed, night presented him with amusements suitable to itself. No wake, for instance, could escape him; a dance without young Phelim O'Toole would have been a thing worthy to be remembered. He was zealously devoted to cock-fighting; on Shrove-Tuesday he shouted loudest among the crowd that attended the sport of throwing at cocks tied to a stake; football and hurling never occurred without him. Bull-baiting, for it was common in his youth, was luxury to him; and ere he reached fourteen everyone knew Phelim O'Toole as an adept at card-playing. Wherever a sheep, a leg of mutton, a dozen of bread, or a bottle of whisky was put up in a shebeen house, to be played for by the country gamblers at the five and ten, or spoiled five, Phelim always took a hand, and was generally successful. On these occasions

he was frequently charged with an over-refined dexterity ; but Phelim usually swore, in vindication of his own innocence, until he got black in the face, as the phrase among such characters goes.

The reader is to consider him now about fifteen, a stout, overgrown, unwashed cub. His parents' anxiety that he should grow strong prevented them from training him to any kind of employment. He was eternally going about in quest of diversion ; and wherever a knot of idlers was to be found, there was Phelim. He had, up to this period, never wore a shoe, nor a single article of dress that had been made for himself, with the exception of one or two pair of sheepskin small clothes. In this way he passed his time, bare-legged, without shoes, clothed in an old coat much too large for him, his neck open, and his sooty locks covered with the hareskin cap, the ears as usual sticking out above his brows. Much of his time was spent in setting the idle boys of the village to fight ; and in carrying lying challenges from one to another. He himself was seldom without a broken head or a black eye ; for, in Ireland, he who is known to be fond ot quarrelling, as the people say, usually "gets enough an' lavins of it." Larry and Sheelah, thinking it now high time that something should be done with Phelim, thought it necessary to give him some share of education. Phelim opposed this bitterly, as an unjustifiable encroachment upon his personal liberty ; but by bribing him with the first and only suit of clothes he had yet got, they at length succeeded in prevailing on him to go.

The school to which he was sent happened to be kept in what is called an Inside Kiln. This kind of kiln is usually—but less so now than formerly—annexed to respectable farmers' outhouses, to which, in agricultural districts, it forms a very necessary appendage. It also serves at the same time as a barn, the kiln-pot being sunk in the shape of an inverted cone at one end, but divided from the barn floor by a wall about three feet high. From this wall beams run across the kiln-pot, over which, in a transverse direction, are laid a number of rafters like the joists of a loft, but not fastened. These ribs are covered with straw, over which again is spread a winnow cloth to keep the grain from being lost. The fire is sunk on a level with the bottom of the kiln-pot, that is, about eight or ten feet below the floor of the barn. The descent to it is by stairs formed at the side wall. We have been thus minute in describing it because, as the reader will presently perceive, the feats of Phelim render it necessary.

On the first day of his entering the school he presented himself with a black eye ; and as his character was well known to both master and scholars, the former felt no hesitation in giving him a wholesome lecture upon the subject of his future conduct. For at least a year before this time he had gained the nickname of "Blessed Phelim," and "Bouncing," epithets bestowed on him by an ironical allusion to his patron saint and his own habits.

"So, Blessed Phelim," said the master, "you are coming to school !!. Well, well ! I only say that miracles will never cease. Arrah, Phelim, will you tell us candidly—ah—I beg your pardon ; I mean, will you tell us the best lie you can coin upon the cause of your coming to

imbibe moral and literary knowledge? Silence, boys, till we hear Blessed Phelim's lie."

"You must hear it, masther," said Phelim. "I'm comin' to larn to read an' write."

"Bravo! by the bones of Prosodius, I expected a lie, but not such a thumper as that. And you're comin' wid a black eye to prove it! A black eye, Phelim, is the blackguard's coat of arms; and to do you ustice, you are seldom widout your crest."

For a few days Phelim attended the school, but learned not a letter. The master usually sent him to be taught by the youngest lads, with a hope of being able to excite a proper spirit of pride and emulation in a mind that required some extraordinary impulse. One day he called him up to ascertain what progress he had actually made; the unsuspecting teacher sat at the time upon the wall which separated the barn floor from the kiln-pot, with his legs dangling at some distance from the ground. It was summer, and the rafters used in drying the grain had been removed. On finding that Blessed Phelim, notwithstanding all the lessons he had received, was still in a state of the purest ignorance, he lost his temper, and brought him over between his knees, that he might give him an occasional cuff for his idleness. The lesson went on, and the master's thumps were thickening about Phelim's ears, much to the worthy youth's displeasure.

"Phelim," said the master, "I'll invert you as a scarecrow for dunces. I'll lay you against the wall, with your head down and your heels up, like a forked carrot."

"But how will you manage that?" said Phelim. "What ud *I* be doin' in the manetime?"

"I'll find a way to manage it," said the master.

"To put my head down an' my heels up, is id?" inquired Phelim.

"You've said it, my worthy," returned his teacher.

"If you don't know the way," replied the pupil, "I'll show you," getting his shoulder under the master's leg, and pitching him heels over head into the kiln-pot. He instantly seized his cap, and ran out of the school, highly delighted at his feat; leaving the scholars to render the master whatever assistance was necessary. The poor man was dangerously hurt, for in addition to a broken arm, he received half a dozen severe contusions on the head, and in different parts of the body.

This closed Phelim's education; for no persuasion could ever induce him to enter a school afterwards; nor could any temptation prevail on the neighbouring teachers to admit him as a pupil.

Phelim now shot up rapidly to the stature of a young man; and a graceful slip was he. From the period of fifteen until nineteen, he was industriously employed in idleness. About sixteen he began to look after the girls, and to carry a cudgel. The father in vain attempted to inoculate him with a love of labour; but Phelim would not receive the infection. His life was a pleasanter one. Sometimes, indeed, when he wanted money to treat the girls at fairs and markets, he would prevail on himself to labour a week or fortnight with some

neighbouring farmer ; but the moment he had earned as much as he deemed sufficient, the spade was thrown aside. Phelim knew all the fiddlers and pipers in the barony ; was master of the ceremonies at every wake and dance that occurred within several miles of him. He was a crack dancer, and never attended a dance without performing a hornpipe on a door or a table ; no man could shuffle, or treble, or cut, or spring, or caper with him. Indeed, it was said that he could dance "Moll Roe" upon the end of a five-gallon keg, and snuff a mould candle with his heels, yet never lose the time. The father and mother were exceedingly proud of Phelim. The former, when he found him grown up, and associating with young men, began to feel a kind of ambition in being permitted to join Phelim and his companions, and to look upon the society of his own son as a privilege. With the girls Phelim was a beauty without paint. They thought every wake truly a scene of sorrow if he did not happen to be present. Every dance was doleful without him. Phelim wore his hat on one side, with a knowing but careless air ; he carried his cudgel with a good-humoured dashing spirit, precisely in accordance with the character of a man who did not care *a traneen* whether he drank with you as a friend, or fought with you as a foe. Never were such songs heard as Phelim could sing, nor such a voice as that with which he sang them. His attitudes and action were inimitable. The droop in his eye was a standing wink at the girls ; and when he sang his funny songs, with what practised ease he gave the darlings a roguish chuck under the chin ! Then his jokes ! "Why, faix," as the fair ones often said of him, "before Phelim speaks at all, one laughs at what he says." This was fact. His very appearance at a wake, dance, or drinking match was hailed by a peal of mirth. This heightened his humour exceedingly ; for say what you will, laughter is to wit what air is to fire—the one dies without the other.

Let no one talk of beauty being on the surface. This is a popular error, and no one but a superficial fellow would defend it. Among ten thousand you could not get a more unfavourable surface than Phelim's. His face resembled the rough side of a colander, or, as he was often told in raillery, "you might grate potatoes on it." The lid of his right eye, as the reader knows, was like the lid of a salt-box, always closed ; and when he risked a wink with the left, it certainly gave him the look of a man shutting out the world and retiring into himself for the purpose of self-examination. No, no ; beauty is in the mind, in the soul ; otherwise Phelim never could have been such a prodigy of comeliness among the girls. This was the distinction the fair sex drew in his favour. "Phelim," they would say, "is not purty, but he's very comely." "Bad end to the one of him but would stale a pig off a tether wid his winnin' ways." And so he would too, without much hesitation, for it was not the first time he had stolen his father's.

From nineteen until the close of his minority, Phelim became a distinguished man in fairs and markets. He was, in fact, the hero of the parish ; but unfortunately he seldom knew on the morning of the fair-day the name of the party or faction on whose side he was to

fight. This was merely a matter of priority, for whoever happened to give him the first treat uniformly secured him. The reason of this pliability on his part was that Phelim, being every person's friend, by his good nature, was nobody's foe except for the day. He fought for fun and whisky. When he happened to drub some companion or acquaintance on the opposite side, he was ever ready to express his regret at the circumstance, and abused them heartily for not having treated him first.

Phelim was also a great Ribbonman ; and from the time he became initiated into the system, his eyes were wonderfully opened to the oppressions of the country. Sessions, decrees, and warrants he looked upon as gross abuses ; assizes, too, by which so many of his friends were put to some inconvenience, he considered as the result of Protestant ascendency ; cancers that ought to be cut out of the constitution. Bailiffs, drivers, tithe-proctors, tax-gatherers, policemen, and parsons he thought were vermin that ought to be compelled to emigrate to a much warmer country than Ireland.

There was no such hand in the country as Phelim at an alibi. Just give him the outline—a few leading particulars of the fact—and he would work wonders. One would think, indeed, that he had been born for that especial purpose ; for as he was never known to utter a syllable of truth but once, when he had a design in not being believed, so there was no risk of a lawyer getting truth out of him. No man was ever afflicted with such convenient maladies as Phelim ; even his sprains, toothaches, and colics seemed to have entered into the Whiteboy system. But, indeed, the very diseases in Ireland are seditious. Many a time has a toothache come in to aid Paddy in obstructing the course of justice ; and a colic been guilty of misprison of treason. Irish deaths, too, are very disloyal, and frequently at variance with the laws. Nor are our births much better; for although more legitimate than those of our English neighbours, yet they are in general more illegal. Phelim, in proving his alibis proved all these positions. On one occasion, "he slep at the prisoner's house, and couldn't close his eye with a thief of a toothache that parsecuted him the whole night ; " so that, in consequence of having the toothache, it was impossible that the prisoner could leave the house without his knowledge.

Again, the prisoner at the bar could not possibly have shot the deceased, "bekase Mickey slep that very night at Phelim's, an' Phelim, bein' ill o' the colic, never slep at all durin' the whole night ; an', by the vartue of his oath, the poor boy couldn't go out o' the house unknownst to him. If he had, Phelim would a-seen him, sure."

Again, " Paddy Cummisky's wife tuck ill of a young one, an' Phelim was sent for to bring the midwife ; but afore he kem to Paddy's, or hard o' the thing at all, the prisoner, arly in the night, comin' to sit awhile wid Paddy, went for the midwife instead o' Phelim, an' thin they sot up an' had a sup in regard of the 'casion ; an' the prisoner never left them at all that night until the next mornir.' Ar' by the

same a token, he remimbered Paddy Cummisky barrin' the door, an' shuttin' the windies, bekase it's not lucky to have them open, for fraid that the fairies 'ud throw their *pishthrogues* upon the young one, an' it not christened."

Phelim was certainly an accomplished youth. As an alibist, however, his career was, like that of all alibists, a short one. The fact was that his face soon became familiar to the court and the lawyers, so that his name and appearance were ultimately rather hazardous to the cause of his friends.

Phelim, on other occasions, when summoned as evidence against his well-wishers or brother Ribbonmen, usually forgot his English, and gave his testimony by an interpreter. Nothing could equal his ignorance and want of common capacity during these trials. His face was as free from every visible trace of meaning as if he had been born an idiot. No block was ever more impenetrable than he.

"What is the noble gintleman sayin'?" he would ask in Irish; and on having that explained, he would inquire, "What is that?" then demand a fresh explanation of the last one, and so on successively, until he was given up in despair.

Sometimes, in cases of a capital nature, Phelim, with the consent of his friends, would come forward and make disclosures, in order to have them put upon their trial and acquitted, lest an approver, or some one earnestly disposed to prosecute might appear against them. Now the alibi and its usual accompaniments are all of old standing in Ireland; but the master-stroke to which we have alluded is a modern invention. Phelim would bear evidence against them: and whilst the government—for it was mostly in government prosecutions he adventured this—believed they had ample grounds for conviction in his disclosures, it little suspected that the whole matter was a plan to defeat itself. In accordance with his design, he gave such evidence upon the table as rendered conviction hopeless. His great object was to damn his own character as a witness, and to make such blunders, premeditated slips, and admissions, as just left him within an inch of a prosecution for perjury. Having succeeded in acquitting his friends, he was content to withdraw amid a volley of pretended execrations, leaving the attorney-general, with all his legal knowledge, outwitted and foiled.

All Phelim's accomplishments, however, were nothing when compared to his gallantry. With personal disadvantages which would condemn any other man to old bachelorship, he was nevertheless the whiteheaded boy among the girls. He himself was conscious of this, and made his attacks upon their hearts indiscriminately. If he met an unmarried female only for five minutes, be she old or ugly, young or handsome, he devoted at least four minutes and three quarters to the tender passion; made love to her with an earnestness that would deceive a saint, backed all his protestations with a supernuity of round oaths, and drew such a picture of her beauty as might suit the houris of Mahomet's paradise.

Phelim and his father were great associates. No two agreed better.

They went to fairs and markets together, got drunk together, and returned home with their arms about each other's neck in the most loving and affectionate manner. Larry, if Phelim were too modest to speak for himself, seldom met a young girl without laying siege to her for the son. He descanted upon his good qualities, glossed over his defects, and drew deeply upon invention in his behalf. Sheelah, on the other hand, was an eloquent advocate for him. She had her eye upon half a dozen of the village girls, to every one of whom she found something to say in Phelim's favour.

But it is time the action of our story should commence. When Phelim had reached his twenty-fifth year, the father thought it was high time for him to marry. The good man had, of course, his own motives for this. In the first place, Phelim, with all his gallantry and cleverness, had never contributed a shilling either towards his own support or that of the family. In the second place, he was never likely to do so. In the third place, the father found him a bad companion; for, in good truth, he had corrupted the good man's morals so evidently that his character was now little better than that of his son. In the fourth place, he never thought of Phelim that he did not see a gallows in the distance; and matrimony, he thought, might save him from hanging, as one poison neutralises another. In the fifth place, the half acre was but a shabby patch to meet the exigencies of the family since Phelim grew up. "Bouncing Phelim," as he was called for more reasons than one, had the gift of good digestion, along with his other accomplishments; and with such energy was it exercised that the "half acre" was frequently in hazard of leaving the family altogether. The father, therefore, felt quite willing, if Phelim married, to leave him the inheritance, and seek a new settlement for himself. Or, if Phelim preferred leaving him, he agreed to give him one half of it, together with an equal division of all his earthly goods; to wit—two goats, of which Phelim was to get one; six hens and a cock, of which Phelim was to get three hens and the chance of a toss up for the cock; four stools, of which Phelim was to get two; two pots—a large one and a small one—the former to go with Phelim; three horn spoons, of which Phelim was to get one and the chance of a toss-up for the third. Phelim was to bring his own bed, provided he did not prefer getting a bottle of fresh straw as a connubial luxury. The blanket was a tender subject; for having been fourteen years in employment, it entangled the father and Phelim touching the prudence of the latter claiming it all. The son was at length compelled to give it up, at least in the character of an appendage to his marriage property. He feared that the wife, should he not be able to replace it by a new one, or should she herself not be able to bring him one as part of her dowry, would find the honeymoon rather lively. Phelim's bedstead admitted of no dispute, the floor of the cabin having served him in that capacity ever since he began to sleep in a separate bed. His pillow was his small-clothes, and his quilt his own coat, under which he slept snugly enough.

The father having proposed, and the son acceded to, these arrange-

ments, the next thing to be done was to pitch upon a proper girl as his wife. This, being a more important matter, was thus discussed by the father and son one evening at their own fireside, in the presence of Sheelah.

"Now, Phelim," said the father, "look about you, an' tell us what girl in the neighbourhood you'd like to be married to."

"Why," replied Phelim, "I'll lave that to you; jist point out the girl you'd *like* for your daughther-in-law, an' be she rich, poor, ould, or ugly, *I'll* delude her. That's the chat."

"Ah, Phelim, if you could put your comedher an Gracey Dalton, you'd be a made boy. She has the full of a rabbit-skin o' guineas."

"A made boy! Faith, they say I'm that as it is, you know. But would you *wish* me to put my comedher on Gracey Dalton? Spake out."

"To be sure I would."

"Ay," observed the mother, "or what ud you think of Miss Patterson. That ud be the girl. She has a fine farm, an' five hundhre pounds. She's a Protestant, but Phelim could make a Christian of her."

"To be sure I could," said Phelim, "have her thumpin' her breast and countin' her *Padareens* in no time. Would you wish me to have *her*, mudher?"

"Throth an' I would, avick."

"That ud never do," observed the father. "Sure you don't think she'd ever think of the likes o' Phelim?"

"Don't make a goose of yourself, ould man," observed Phelim. "Do you think, if I set about it, that I'd not manufacture her senses as asy as I'd peel a piatee."

"Well, well," replied the father, "in the name o' goodness make up to her. Faith, it ud be something to have a jauntin'-car in the family?"

"Ay, but what the sorra will I do for a suit o' clo'es," observed Phelim. "I could never go near her in these breeches. My elbows, too, are out o' this ould coat, bad luck to it! An' as for a waistcoat, why, I dunna but it's a sin to call what I'm wearin' a waistcoat at all. Thin agin—why, blood alive, sure I can't go to her barefooted, an' I dunna but it ud be dacenter to do that same, than to step out in sich excuses for brogues as these. An' in regard o' the stockins, why, I've pulled them down, sthrivin' to look dacent, till one ud think the balls o' my legs is at my heels."

"The sorra word's in that but thruth, anyhow," observed the father; "but what's to be done? For *we* have no way of gettin' them."

"Faith I don't know that," said Phelim. "What if we'd borry? I could get the loan of a pair of breeches from Dudley Dwire, an' a coat from Sam Appleton. We might thry Billy Brady for a waistcoat an' a pair o' stockins. Barny Buckram-back, the pinsioner, ud lend me his pumps; an' we want nothing now but a hat."

"Nothin' undher a Caroline ud do, goin' there," observed the father.

"I think Father Carroll ud oblage me wid the loan o' one for a day or two," said Phelim; "he has two or three o' them, all as good as ever."

"But, Phelim," said the father, "before we go to all this trouble, are you sure you *could* put your comedher on Miss Pattherson?"

"None o' your nonsense," said Phelim, "don't you know I could? I hate a man to be puttin' questions to me, when he knows them himself It's a fashion *you* have got, an' you ought to dhrop it."

"Well, thin," said the father, "let us set about it to-morrow. If we can borry the clo'es, thry your luck."

Phelim and the father, the next morning, set out, each in a different direction, to see how far they could succeed on the borrowing system. The father was to make a descent on Dudley Dwire for the breeches, and appeal to the generosity of Sam Appleton for the coat. Phelim himself was to lay his case before the priest, and to assail Buckram-back, the pensioner, on his way home for the brogues.

When Phelim arrived at the priest's house, he found none of the family up but the housekeeper. After bidding her good morrow, and being desired to sit down, he entered into conversation with the good woman, who felt anxious to know the scandal of the whole parish.

"Aren't you a son of Larry Toole's, young man?"

"I am, indeed, Mrs. Doran. I'm Phelim O'Toole, my mother says."

"I hope you're comin' to spake to the priest about your duty?"

"Why, then, be gorra, I'm glad you axed me, so I am—for only you seen the pinance in my face, you'd never suppose sich a thing. I want to make my confishion to him, wid the help o' goodness."

"Is there any news goin', Phelim?"

"Divil a much, barrin what you hard yourself, I suppose, about Frank Fogarty, that went mad yestherday, for risin' the meal on the poor, an' ate the ears off himself afore anybody could see him."

"*Vick na hoiah*, Phelim; do you tell me so?"

"Why, man o' Moses! is it possible you did not hear it, ma'am?"

"Oh, wurrah, man alive, not a syllable! Ate the ears off of himself! Phelim, acushla, see what it is to be hard an the poor!"

"Oh, he was ever an' always the biggest nager livin', ma'am. Ay, an' when he was tied up, till a blessed priest ud be brought to *mali-vogue* the divil out of him, he got a scythe an' cut his own two hands off."

"No thin, Phelim."

"Faitha, ma'am, sure enough. I suppose, ma'am, you hard about Biddy Duignan?"

"Who is she, Phelim?"

"Why, the misfortunate crathur's a daughther of her father's, ould Mick Duignan, of Tavenimore."

"An' what about her, Phelim? What happened her?"

"Faix, ma'am, a bit of a mistake she met wid: but, anyhow, ould Harry Connolly's to stand in the chapel nine Sundays, an' to make

three stations to Lough Dergh for it. Bedad, they say it's as purty a crathur as you'd see in a day's thravellin'."

"Harry Connolly! Why, I know Harry, but I never heard of Biddy Duignan or her father at all. Harry Connolly! Is it a man that's bent over his staff for the last twenty years! Hut, tut, Phelim, don't say sich a thing."

"Why, ma'am, sure he takes wid it himself; he doesn't deny it at all, the ould sinner."

"Oh, that I mayn't sin, Phelim, if one knows who to thrust in this world, so they don't. Why, the desateful ould—hut, Phelim, I can't give in to it."

"Faix, ma'am, no wondher; but sure, when he confesses it himself! Bedad, Mrs. Doran, I never seen you look so well. Upon my sowl, you'd take the shine out o' the youngest o' thim!"

"Is it me, Phelim? Why, you're beside yourself."

"Beside myself, am I? Faith an' if I am, what I said's thruth, anyhow. I'd give more nor I'll name to have so red a pair of cheeks as you have. Sowl, they're thumpers."

"Ha, ha, ha! Oh, that I mayn't sin, but that's a good joke! An ould woman, near sixty!"

"Now, Mrs. Doran, that's nonsense, an' nothing else. Near sixty? Oh, by my purty, that's runnin' away wid the story entirely—No, nor thirty. Faith, I know them that's not more nor five or six-an'-twenty, that ud be glad to borry the loan of your face for a while. Divil a word o' lie in that."

"No, no, Phelim, aroon, I seen the day; but that's past. I remimber when the people *did* say I was worth lookin' at. Won't you sit near the fire? You're in the dhraft there."

"Thank you kindly, ma'am; faith, you have the name, far an' near, for bein' the civillist woman alive this day. But, upon my sowl, if you wor ten times as civil, an' say that you're not aquil to any young girl in the parish, I'd dispute it wid you; an' say it was nothin' else than a bounce."

"Arrah, Phelim darlin', how can you palaver me that way? I hope your dacent father's well, Phelim, an' your honest mother."

"Divil a fear o' them. Now, I'd hould nine to one that the purtiest o' them hasn't a sweeter mout' than you have. By dad you have. By dad you have a pair o' lips, God bless them that—well, well ——"

Phelim here ogled her with looks particularly wistful.

"Phelim, you're losin' the little senses you had."

"Faix, an' it's you that's taken them out o' me, then. A purty woman always makes a fool o' me. Divil a word o' lie in it. Faix, Mrs. Doran, ma'am, you have a chin o' your own! Well, well! Oh, be gorra, I wish I hadn't come out this mornin', anyhow!"

"Arrah, why, Phelim? In throth it's you that's the quare Phelim!"

"Why, ma'am—Oh, bedad it's a folly to talk. I can't go widout tastin' them. Sich a pair o' timptations as your lips, barrin' your eyes, I didn't see this many a day."

"Tastin' what, you mad crathur?"

"Why, I'll show you what I'd like to be afther tastin'. Oh! bedad, I'll have no refusin'; a purty woman always makes a foo——"

"Keep away, Phelim; keep off—bad end to you; what do you mane? Don't you see Fool Art lyin' in the corner there undher the sacks. I don't think he's asleep."

"Fool Art! why, the misfortunate idiot, what about him? Sure he hasn't sinse to know the right hand from the left. Bedad, ma'am, the thruth is that a purty woman always makes a ——"

"Throth an' you won't," said she, struggling.

"Throth an' I will, thin, taste the same lips, or we'll see who's strongest!"

A good-humoured struggle took place between the housekeeper and Phelim, who found her, in point of personal strength, very near a match for him. She laughed heartily, but Phelim attempted to salute her with a face of mock gravity as nearly resembling that of a serious man as he could assume. In the meantime, chairs were overturned and wooden dishes trundled about; a crash was heard here, and another there. Phelim drove her to the hob, and from the hob they bounced into the fire, the embers and ashes of which were kicked up into a cloud about them.

"Phelim, spare your strinth," said the funny housekeeper, "it won't do. Be asy now, or I'll get angry. The priest, too, will hear the noise, and so will Fool Art."

"To the divil wid Fool Art, an' the priest, too," said Phelim; "who cares a buckey about the priest whin a purty woman like you is consarn——"

"What's this?" said the priest, stepping down from the parlour—"what's the matter? Oh, oh, upon my word, Mrs. Doran! Very good, indeed! Under my own roof, too! An' pray, ma'am, who is the gallant? Turn round, young man. Yes, I see! Why, better and better! Bouncing Phelim O'Toole, that never spoke truth! I think, Mr. O'Toole, that when you come a-courting, you ought to consider it worth while to appear somewhat more smooth in your habiliments. I simply venture to give that as my opinion."

"Why, sure enough," replied Phelim, without a moment's hesitation, "your reverence has *found us out.*"

"*Found you out!* Why, is *that* the tone you speak in?"

"Faith, sir, thruth's best. I wanted her to tell it to you long ago, but she wouldn't. Howsomever, it's still time enough.—Hem! The thruth, sir, is that Mrs. Doran an' I is goin' to get the words said as soon as we can; so, sir, wid the help o' goodness, I came to see if your reverence ud call us next Sunday wid a blessin'."

Mrs. Doran had for at least a dozen round years before this been in a state of hopelessness upon the subject of matrimony; nothing in the shape of a proposal having in the course of that period come in her way. Now we have Addison's authority for affirming that an old woman who permits the thoughts of love to get into her head becomes a very odd kind of animal. Mrs. Doran, to do her justice, had not

thought of it for nearly three lustres; for this reason, that she had so far overcome her vanity as to deem it impossible that a proposal could be ever made to her. It is difficult, however, to know what a day may bring forth. Here was an offer dropping like a ripe plum to her mouth. She turned the matter over in her mind with a quickness equal to that of Phelim himself. One leading thought struck her forcibly: if she refused to close with this offer she would never get another.

"Is it come to this, Mrs. Doran?" inquired the priest.

"Oh, bedad, sir, she knows it is," replied Phelim, giving her a wink with the safe eye.

Now Mrs. Doran began to have her suspicions. The wink she considered as decidedly ominous. Phelim, she concluded with all the sagacity of a woman thinking upon *that* subject, had winked at her to assent only for the purpose of getting themselves out of the scrape *for the present*. She feared that Phelim would be apt to break off the match, and take some opportunity, before Sunday should arrive, of preventing the priest from calling them. Her decision, however, was soon made. She resolved, if possible, to pin down Phelim to his own proposal.

"Is this true, Mrs. Doran?" inquired the priest, a second time.

Mrs. Doran could not, with any regard to the delicacy of her sex, give an assent without proper emotion. She accordingly applied her gown-tail to her eyes, and shed a few natural tears in reply to the affecting query of the pastor.

Phelim, in the meantime, began to feel mystified. Whether Mrs. Doran's tears were a proof that she was disposed to take the matter seriously, or whether they were tears of shame and vexation for having been caught in the character of a romping old hoyden, he could not then exactly decide. He had, however, awful misgivings upon the subject.

"Then," said the priest, "it is to be understood that I'm to call you both on Sunday."

"There's no use in keepin' it back from you," replied Mrs. Doran. "I know it's foolish of me; but we have all our failins, and to be fond of Phelim, there, is mine. Your reverence *is* to call us next Sunday, as Phelim tould you. I am sure I can't tell you how he deluded me at all, the desaver o' the world!"

Phelim's face during this acknowledgment was, like Goldsmith's Haunch of Venison, "a subject for painters to study." His eyes projected like a hare's, until nothing could be seen but the balls. Even the drooping lid raised itself up, as if it were never to droop again.

"Well, said the priest, "I shall certainly not use a single argument to prevent you. Your choice, I must say, does you credit, particularly when it is remembered that you have come at least to years of discretion. Indeed, many persons might affirm that you have gone beyond them; but I say nothing. In the meantime your wishes must be complied with. I will certainly call Phelim O'Toole and Bridget

Doran on Sunday next ; and one thing I know, that we shall have a very merry congregation."

Phelim's eyes turned upon the priest and the old woman alternately with an air of bewilderment which, had the priest been a man of much observation, might have attracted his attention.

"Oh, murdher alive, Mrs. Doran," said Phelim, "how am I to do for clo'es? Faith, I'd like to appear *dacent* in the thing, anyhow."

"True," said the priest. "Have you made no provision for smoothing the externals of your admirer? Is he to appear in this trim?"

"Bedad, sir," said Phelim, "we never thought o' that. All the world knows, your reverence, that I might carry my purse in my eye an' never feel a mote in it. But the thruth is, sir, she was so lively on the subject—in a kind of pleasant, coaxin' hurry of her own—an' indeed I was so myself, too. Augh, Mrs. Doran! Be gorra, sir, she put her comedher an me entirely, so she did. Well, be my sowl, I'll be the flower of a husband to her, anyhow. I hope your reverence 'ill come to the christ'nin'? But about the clo'es? bad luck saize the tack I have to put to my back but what you see an me, if we were to be married to-morrow."

"Well, Phelim, aroon," said Mrs. Doran, "his reverence here has my little pences o' money in his hands, an' the best way is for you to get the price of a suit from him. You must get clo'es, an' good ones too, Phelim, sooner nor any stop should be put to our marriage."

"Augh, Mrs. Doran," said Phelim, ogling her from the safe eye with a tender suavity of manner that did honour to his heart; "be gorra, ma'am, you've played the puck entirely wid me. Faith, I'm getting fonder an' fonder of her every minute, your reverence."

He set his eye, as he uttered this, so sweetly and significantly upon the old housekeeper that the priest thought it a transgression of decorum in his presence.

"I think," said he, "you had better keep your melting looks to yourself, Phelim. Restrain your gallantry, if you please, at least until I withdraw."

"Why, blood alive! sir, when people's fond of one another it's hard to keep the love down. Augh, Mrs. Doran! Faith, you've rendhered my heart like a lump o' tallow."

"Follow me to the parlour," said the priest, "and let me know, Bridget, what sum I am to give this melting gallant of yours."

"I may as well get what'll do the weddin' at wanst," observed Phelim. "It'll save throuble, in the first place; an' sackinly, it'll save time; for, plase goodness, I'll have everything ready for houldin' the weddin' the Monday afther the last call. By the hole o' my coat, the minute I get the clo'es we'll be spliced, an' then for the honeymoon!"

"How much money shall I give him?" said the priest.

"Indeed, sir, I think you ought to know that; I'm ignorant of what ud make a dacent weddin'. We don't intend to get marrid undher a hedge; we've frinds on both sides, an' of coorse we must have them about us, plase goodness."

"Be gorra, sir, it's no wondher I'm fond of her, the darlin'! Bad win to you, Mrs. Doran, how did you come over me at all?"

"Bridget," said the priest, "I have asked you a simple question, to which I expect a plain answer. What money am I to give this tallow-hearted swain of yours?"

"Why, your reverence, whatsomever you think may be enough for full, an' plinty, an' dacency, at the weddin'."

"Not forgettin' the *thatch* for me, in the manetime," said Phelim. "Nothin' less will sarve us, plase your reverence. Maybe, sir, you'd think of comin' to the weddin' yourself?"

"There are in my hands," observed the priest, "one hundred and twenty-two guineas of your money, Bridget. Here, Phelim, are ten for your wedding suit and wedding expenses. Go to *your* wedding? No! don't suppose for a moment that I countenance this transaction in the slightest degree. I comply with your wishes, because I heartily despise you both; but certainly this foolish old woman most. Give me an acknowledgment for this, Phelim."

"God bless you, sir!" said Phelim, as if he had paid them a compliment. "In regard o' the acknowledgment, sir, I acknowledge it wid all my heart; but bad luck to the scrape at all I can write."

"Well, no matter. You admit, Bridget, that I give this money to this blessed youth by your authority and consent."

"Surely, your reverence; I'll never go back of it."

"Now, Phelim," said the priest, "you have the money; pray get married as soon as possible."

"I'll give you my oath," said Phelim; "an' be the blessed iron tongs in the grate there I'll not lose a day in getting myself spliced. Isn't she the tendher-hearted sowl, your reverence? Augh, Mrs. Doran?"

"Leave my place," said the priest. "I cannot forget the old proverb, that one fool makes many, but an old fool is worse than any. So it is with this old woman."

"Ould woman! Oh, thin, I'm sure I don't desarve this from your reverence!" exclaimed the housekeeper, wiping her eyes: "if I'm a little seasoned now, you know I wasn't always so. If ever there was a faithful sarvant I was that, an' managed your house and place as honestly as I'll manage my own, plase goodness."

As they left the parlour Phelim became the consoler.

"Whisht, you darlin'!" he exclaimed. "Sure you'll have Bouncin Phelim to comfort you. But now that he has shut the door, what—hem—I'd take it as a piece o' civility if you'd open my eyes a little; I mane—hem—was it—is this doin' *him*, or how? Are you—hem—do you *undherstand* me, Mrs. Doran?"

"What is it you want to know, Phelim? I think everything is very plain."

"Oh, the divil a plainer, I suppose. But, in the manetime, might one ax, out o' mere curosity, if you're *in arnest?*"

"In arnest! Arrah, what did I give you my money for, Phelim?

Well, now that everything is settled, God forgive you if you make a bad husband to me."

"A bad *what?*"

"I say, God forgive you if you make a bad husband to me. I'm afeard, Phelim, that I'll be too foolish about you—that I'll be too fond of you."

Phelim looked at her in solemn silence, and then replied: "Let us trust in God that you may be enabled to overcome the weakness. Pray to him to avoid all folly, an' above everything, to give you a dacent stock of discration, for it's a mighty fine thing for a woman of your yea——hem, a mighty fine thing it is, indeed, for a sasoned woman, as you say you are."

"When will the weddin' take place, Phelim?"

"The *what?*" said Phelim, opening his brisk eye with a fresh stare of dismay.

"Why, the weddin', acushla. When will it take place. I think the Monday afther the last call ud be the best time. We wouldn't lose a day thin. Throth, I long to hear my last call over, Phelim, jewel."

Phelim gave her another look.

"The last call! Thin, by the vestment, you don't long half as much for your *last* call as I do."

"Arrah, Phelim, did you take the—the—what you wor wantin awhile agone? Throth, myself disremimbers."

"Ay, a round dozen o' them. How can you forget it?"

The idiot in the corner here gave a loud snore, but composed himself to sleep, as if insensible to all that passed.

"Throth, an' I do forget it. Now, Phelim, you'll not go till you take a cup o' tay wid myself. Throth, I do forget it, Phelim darlin', jewel."

Phelim's face now assumed a very queer expression. He twisted his features into all possible directions; brought his mouth first round to one ear and then to the other; put his hand, as if in great pain, on the pit of his stomach; lifted one knee up till it almost touched his chin, then let it down, and instantly brought up the other in a similar manner.

"Phelim darlin', what ails you?" inquired the tender old nymph. "Wurrah, man alive, aren't you well?"

"Oh, be the vestment," said Phelim, "what's this at all! Murdher sheery, what'll I do! Oh, I'm very bad! At death's door, so I am! Be gorra, Mrs. Doran, I must be off."

"Wurrah, Phelim dear, won't you stop till we settle everything?"

"Oh, purshuin' to the haporth I can settle till I recover o' this murdherin' colic! All's asthray wid me in the inside. I'll see you—I'll see you—*Hanim an diouol!* what's this—I must be off like a shot—oh, murdher sheery!—but—but—I'll see you to-morrow. In the manetime, I'm—I'm for ever oblaged to you for—for—lendin' me the—loan of—oh, by the vestments, I'm a gone man!—for lendin' me the *loan* of the ten guineas—Oh, I'm gone!"

Phelim disappeared on uttering these words, and his strides on

passing out of the house were certainly more rapid and vigorous than those of a man labouring under pain. In fact, he never looked behind him until one half the distance between the priest's house and his father's cabin had been fairly traversed.

Some misgivings occurred to the old housekeeper, but her vanity, having been revived by Phelim's blarney, would not permit her to listen to them. She had, besides, other motives to fortify her faith in his attachment. First, there was her money, a much larger sum than ever Phelim could expect with any *other* woman, young or old; again, they were to be called on the following Sunday, and she knew that when a marriage affair proceeds so far, obstruction or disappointment is not to be apprehended.

When Phelim reached home, he found the father returned after having borrowed a full suit of clothes for him. Sam Appleton, on hearing from Larry that Bouncing Phelim was about to get a "great match,"[1] generously lent him coat, waistcoat, hat, and smallclothes.

When Phelim presented himself at home he scarcely replied to the queries put to him by his father and mother concerning his interview with the priest. He sat down, rubbed his hands, scratched his head, rose up, and walked to and fro, in a mood of mind so evidently between mirth and chagrin that his worthy parents knew not whether to be merry or miserable.

"Phelim," said the mother, "did you take anything while you wor away?"

"Did I take anything, is it? Arrah, be asy, old woman? Did I take anything! Faith, you may say that!"

"Let us know, anyhow, what's the matther wid you?" asked the father.

"Tare-an'-ounze!" exclaimed the son, "what is this for, at all at all? It's too killin' I am, so it is."

"You're not lookin' at Sam Appleton's clo'es," said the father, "that he lent you the loan of, hat an' all?"

"Do you want to put an affront upon me, ould man? To the divil wid himself an' his clo'es! When I want clo'es I'll buy them wid my own money!"

"Larry," observed the mother, "there's yourself all over—as proud as a paycock when the sup's in his head, an' ud spake as big widout the sign o' money in your pocket, as if you had the rint of an estate."

"What do you say about the sign o' money?" exclaimed Phelim, with a swagger. "Maybe you'll call *that* the sign o' money!" he added, producing the ten guineas in gold.

The father and mother looked at it for a considerable time, then at each other, and shook their heads.

"Phelim!" said the father, solemnly.

"Phelim!" said the mother, awfully; and both shook their heads again.

"You wor never over-scrupulous," the father proceeded, "an' you

[1] When a country girl is said to have a large fortune, the peasantry, when speaking of her in reference to matrimony, say she's a "great match."

know you have many little things to answer for, in the way of picking up what didn't belong to yourself. I think, too, you're not the same you wor afore you tuck to swearin' the alibies."

"Faith, an' I doubt I'll have to get some one to swear an alibi for myself soon," Phelim replied.

"Why, blessed hour!" said Larry, "didn't I often tell you never to join the boys in anything that might turn out a hangin' matther?"

"If this is not a hangin' matther," said Phelim, "it's something nearly as bad: it's a marryin' matther. Sure I deluded another since you seen me last. Divil a word o' lie in it. I was clane fell in love wid this mornin' about seven o'clock."

"But how did you get the money, Phelim?"

"Why, from the youthful sprig that fell in love wid me. Sure we're to be 'called' in the chapel on Sunday next.'

"Why, thin, now, Phelim! An' who is the young crathur? for in throth she must be young to go to give the money beforehand!"

"Murdher!" exclaimed Phelim, "what's this for! Hell purshue her, the ould rat-thrap! Was ever anyone *done* as I am! Who is she! Why she's—oh, murdher, oh!—she's no other than—hem——divil a one else than Father O'Hara's housekeeper, ould Biddy Doran!"

The mirth of the old couple was excessive. The father laughed till he fell off his stool, and the mother till the tears ran down her cheeks.

"Death alive, ould man! but you're very merry," said Phelim. "If you wor my age, an' in such an amplush, you'd laugh on the wrong side o' your mouth. Maybe you'll turn your tune when you hear that she has a hundhre an' twenty guineas."

"An' you'll be rich, too," said the father. "The sprig an' you will be rich!—ha, ha, ha!"

"An' the family they'll have!" said the mother, in convulsions.

"Why, in regard o' that," said Phelim, rather nettled, "sure we can do as my father an' you did: we can kiss the Lucky Stone, an' make a station."

"Phelim, aroon," said the mother, seriously, "put it out o' your head. Sure you wouldn't go to bring me a daughter-in-law oulder nor myself?"

"I'd as soon *go over*,"[1] said Phelim; "or *swing* itself, before I'd marry sich a piece o' desate. Hard feedin' to her! how she did me to my face!"

Phelim then entered into a long-visaged detail of the scene at Father O'Hara's, dwelling bitterly on the alacrity with which the old housekeeper ensnared him in his own mesh.

"However," he concluded, "she'd be a sharp one if she'd do me altogether. We're not marrid yet; an' I've a consate o' my own that *she's* done for the ten guineas, anyhow!"

A family council was immediately held upon Phelim's matrimonial prospects. On coming close to the speculation of Miss Patterson, it

[1] A familiar term for "transportation."

was somehow voted, notwithstanding Phelim's powers of attraction, to be rather a discouraging one. Gracey Dalton was also given up. The matter was now serious, the time short, and Phelim's bounces touching his own fascinations with the sex in general were considerably abated. It was therefore resolved that he ought to avail himself of Sam Appleton's clothes until his own could be made. Sam, he said, would not press him for them immediately, inasmuch as he was under obligation to Phelim's silence upon some midnight excursions that he had made.

"Not," added Phelim, "but I'm as much, an' maybe more, in his power than he is in mine."

When breakfast was over, Phelim and the father, after having determined to "drink a bottle" that night in the family of a humble young woman, named Donovan, who, they all agreed, would make an excellent wife for him, rested upon their oars until evening. In the meantime Phelim sauntered about the village, as he was in the habit of doing, whilst the father kept the day as a holiday. We have never told our readers that Phelim was in love, because, in fact, we know not whether he was or not. Be this as it may, we simply inform them that in a little shed in the lower end of the village lived a person with whom Phelim was very intimate, called Foodle Flattery. He was, indeed, a man after Phelim's own heart, and Phelim was a boy after his. He maintained himself by riding country races; by handing, breeding, and feeding cocks; by fishing, poaching, and serving processes; and finally, by his knowledge as a cow-doctor and farrier—into the two last of which he had given Phelim some insight. We say the two last, for in most of the other accomplishments Phelim was fully his equal. Phelim frequently envied him his life. It was an idle, amusing, vagabond kind of existence, just such a one as he felt a relish for. This man had a daughter, rather well-looking; and it so happened that he and Phelim had frequently spent whole nights out together, no one knew on what employment. Into Flattery's house did Phelim saunter with something like an inclination to lay the events of the day before him, and to ask his advice upon his future prospects. On entering the cabin he was much surprised to find the daughter in a very melancholy mood; a circumstance which puzzled him not a little, as he knew that they lived very harmoniously together. Sally had been very useful to her father; and, if fame did not belie her, was sometimes worthy Foodle's assistant in his nocturnal exploits. She was certainly reputed to be "light handed;" an imputation which caused the young men of her acquaintance to avoid, in their casual conversations with her, any allusion to matrimony.

"Sally, achora," said Phelim, when he saw her in distress, "what's the fun. Where's your father?"

"Oh, Phelim," she replied, bursting into tears, "long runs the fox, but he's cotch at last. My father's in gaol."

Phelim's jaw dropped. "In gaol! *Chorp an diouol*, no!"

"It's thruth, Phelim. Curse upon this Whiteboy business; I wish it had never come into the counthry at all."

"Sally, I must see him; you know I must. But tell me how it happened. Was it at home he was taken?"

"No; he was taken this mornin' in the market. I was wid him sellin' some chickens. What'll you and Sam Appleton do, Phelim?"

"Uz! Why, what danger is there aither to Sam or me, you darlin'?"

"I'm sure, Phelim, I don't know; but he tould me that if I was provided for he'd be firm, an' take chance of his thrial. But he says, poor man, that it ud break his heart to be thransported, lavin' me behind him wid nobody to take care o' me. He says, too, if anything 'ud make him *stag*, it's fear of the thrial goin' aginst himself; for, as he said to me, what ud become of you, Sally, if anything happened me?"

A fresh flood of tears followed this disclosure, and Phelim's face, which was certainly destined to undergo on that day many variations of aspect, became remarkably blank.

"Sally, you insinivator, I'll hould a thousand guineas you'd never guess what brought me here to-day."

"Arrah, how could I, Phelim? To plan somethin' wid my fadher, maybe."

"No, but to plan somethin' wid yourself, you coaxin' jewel, you. Now tell me this—Would you marry a certain gay, roguish, well-built young fellow they call Bouncin' Phelim?"

"Phelim, don't be gettin' an wid your fun now, an' me in affliction. Sure, I know well you wouldn't throw yourself away on a poor girl like me, that has nothing but a good pair of hands to live by."

"Be my sowl, an' you live by them. Well, but set in case—supposin'—that same Bouncin' Phelim was willin' to make you mistress of the half acre, what ud you be sayin'?"

"Phelim, if a body thought you worn't jokin' them—ah, the dickens go wid you, Phelim—this is more o' your thricks—but if it was thruth you wor spakin', Phelim?"

"It is thruth," said Phelim; "be the vestment, it's nothin' else. Now, say yes or no; for if it's a thing that it's to be a match, you must go an' tell him that I'll marry you, an' he must be as firm as a rock. But see—Sally, by thim five crasses, it's not bekase your father's *in* I'm marryin' you at all. Sure I'm in love wid you, acushla! Divil a lie in it. Now, yes or no?"

"Well—throth—to be sure—the sorra one, Phelim, but you have quare ways wid you. Now, are you downright in airnest?"

"Be the stool I'm sittin' on!"

"Well, in the name o' goodness, I'll go to my father, an' let him know it. Poor man, it'll take the fear out of his heart. Now, can he depind on you, Phelim?"

"Why, all I can say is that we'll get ourselves called on Sunday next. Let himself, sure, send some one to autorize the priest to call us. An' now that all's settled, don't I desarve somethin'? Oh, be gorra, surely."

"Behave, Phelim—oh—oh—Phelim, now—there, you've tuck it—

och, the curse of the crows on you, see the way you have my hair down! There now, you broke my comb, too. Throth, you're a wild slip, Phelim. I hope you won't be goin' on this a-way wid the girls when you get married."

"Is it me, you coaxer? No, faith, I'll wear a pair of winkers, for fraid o' lookin at them at all. Oh, be gorra, no, Sally, I'll lave that to the great people. Sure, they say, the devil a differ *they* make at all."

"Go off now, Phelim, till I get ready an' set out to my father. But, Phelim, never breathe a word about him bein' in gaol. No one knows it but ourselves—that is, none o' the neighbours."

"I'll sing dumb," said Phelim. "Well, *banaght lath a rogorah!*[1] Tell him the thruth—to be *game*, an' he'll find you and me sweeled together whin he comes out, plase goodness."

Phelim was but a few minutes gone when the old military cap of Fool Art projected from the little bedroom, which a wicker wall, plastered with mud, divided from the other part of the cabin.

"Is he gone?" said Art.

"You may come out, Art," said she, "he's gone."

"Ha!" said Art, triumphantly, "I often tould him, when he vexed me an' pelted me wid snowballs, that I'd come 'long sides wid him yet. An' it's not over aither. Fool Art can snore when he's not asleep, an' see wid his eyes shut. Wherroo for Art!"

"But, Art, maybe he intinds to marry the housekeeper afther all?"

"Hi the colic, the colic!
An' ho the colic for Phelim!"

"Then you think he won't, Art?"

Hi the colic, the colic!
An' ho the colic for Phelim!"

"Now, Art, don't say a word about my father *not* bein' in gaol. He's to be back from my grandfather's in a short time, an' if we manage well, you'll see what you'll get, Art—a brave new shirt, Art."

"Art has the lane for Phelim, but it's not the long one wid no turn in it. Wherroo for Art."

Phelim, on his return home, felt queer; here was a second matrimonial predicament, considerably worse than the first, into which he was hooked decidedly against his will. The worst feature in this case was the danger to be apprehended from Foodle Flattery's disclosures, should he take it into his head to 'peach upon his brother Whiteboys. Indeed, Phelim began to consider it a calamity that he ever entered into their system at all; for on running over his exploits along with them, he felt that he was liable to be taken up any morning of the week and lodged in one of his Majesty's boarding-houses. The only security he had was the honesty of his confederates; and experience took the liberty of pointing out to him many cases in which those who

[1] My blessing be with you, you rogue!

considered themselves quite secure upon the same grounds either dangled or crossed the water. He remembered, too, some prophecies that had been uttered concerning him with reference both to hanging and matrimony. Touching the former, it was often said that "he'd die where the bird flies"—between heaven and earth; on matrimony, that there seldom was a swaggerer among the girls but came to the ground at last.

Now Phelim had a memory of his own, and in turning over his situation, and the prophecies that had been so confidently pronounced concerning him, he felt, as we said, rather queer. He found his father and mother in excellent spirits when he got home. The good man had got a gallon of whisky on credit; for it had been agreed on not to break the ten golden guineas, until they should have ascertained how the match-making would terminate that night at Donovan's.

"Phelim," said the father, "strip yourself, an' put on Sam's clo'es: you must send him down yours for a day or two; he says it's the least he may have the wearin' o' them, so long as you have his."

"Right enough," said Phelim; "wid all my heart. I'm ready to make a fair swap wid him any day, for that matther."

"I sent word to the Donovans that we're to go to coort there to-night," said Larry, "so that they'll be prepared for us; an' as it would be shabby not to have a friend, I asked Sam Appleton himself. He's to folly us."

"I see," said Phelim, "I see. Well, the best boy in Europe Sam is for sich a spree. Now, fadher, you must lie like the ould *diowol* to-night. Back everything I say, an' there's no fear of us. But about what she's to get, you must hould out for that. I'm to despise it, you know. I'll abuse you for spakin' about fortune, but don't budge an inch."

"It's not the first time I've done that for you, Phelim; but in regard o' these ten guineas, why, you must put them in your pocket, for fraid they'd be wantin' to get off wid layin' down guinea for guinea. You see, they don't think *we* have a rap! an' if they propose it, we'll be up to them."

"Larry," observed Sheelah, "don't make a match, except they give that pig they have. Hould out for that by all means."

"Tare an' ounze!" exclaimed Phelim, "am I goin' to take the counthry out o' the face? By the vestments, I'm a purty boy! Do you know the fresh news I have for yees?"

"Not ten guineas more, Phelim," replied the father.

"Maybe you soodhered another ould woman," said the mother.

"Be asy," replied Phelim. "No, but by the five crasses, I deluded a young one since I went out!"

The old couple were once more disposed to be mirthful, but Phelim confirmed his assertion with such a multiplicity of oaths that they believed him. Nothing, however, could wring the secret of her name out of him. He had reasons for concealing it which he did not wish to divulge. In fact, he could never endure ridicule, and the name of Sally Flattery, as the person whom he had "deluded," would constitute

on his part a triumph quite as sorry as that which he had achieved in Father O'Hara's. In Ireland no man ever thinks of marrying a female thief—which Sally was strongly suspected to be—except some worthy fellow who happens to be gifted with the same propensity.

When the proper hour arrived, honest Phelim, after having already made arrangements to be called on the following Sunday as the intended husband of two females, now proceeded with great coolness to make, if possible, a similar engagement with a third.

There is something, however, to be said for Phelim. His conquest over the housekeeper was considerably out of the common course of love affairs. He had drawn upon his invention only to bring himself and the old woman out of the ridiculous predicament in which the priest found them. He had, moreover, intended to prevail on her to lend him the hat, in case the priest himself had refused him. He was consequently not prepared for the vigorous manner in which Mrs. Doran fastened upon the subject of matrimony. On suspecting that she was inclined to be serious, he pleaded his want of proper apparel; but here again the liberality of the housekeeper silenced him, whilst, at the same time, it opened an excellent prospect of procuring that which he most required—a decent suit of clothes. This induced him to act a part that he did not feel. He saw the old woman was resolved to outwit him, and he resolved to overreach the old woman.

His marriage with Sally Flattery was to be merely a matter of chance. If he married her at all, he knew it must be in self-defence. He felt that her father had him in his power, and that he was anything but a man to be depended on. He also thought that his being called with her on the Sunday following would neutralise his call with the housekeeper; just as positive and negative quantities in algebra cancel each other. But he was quite ignorant that the story of Flattery's imprisonment was merely a plan of the daughter's to induce him to marry her.

With respect to Peggy Donovan, he intended, should he succeed in extricating himself from the meshes which the other two had thrown around him, that she should be the elected one to whom he was anxious to unite himself. As to the confusion produced by being called to three at once, he knew that, however laughable in itself, it would be precisely something like what the parish would expect from *him*. Bouncing Phelim was no common man, and to be called to three on the same Sunday would be a corroboration of his influence with the sex. It certainly chagrined him not a little that one of them was an old woman, and the other of indifferent morals, but still it exhibited the claim of three women upon one man, and that satisfied him. His mode of proceeding with Peggy Donovan was regular and according to the usages of the country. The notice had been given that he and his father would go a-courting, and of course they brought the whisky with them, that being the custom among persons in their circumstances in life. These humble courtships very much resemble the driving of a bargain between two chapmen; for, indeed, the closeness of the demands on the one side, and the reluctance of con-

cession on the other, are almost incredible. Many a time has a match been broken up by a refusal on the one part to give a slip of a pig, or a pair of blankets, or a year-old calf. These are small matters in themselves, but they are of importance to those who, perhaps have nothing else on earth with which to begin the world.

The house to which Phelim and his father directed themselves was, like their own, of the humblest description. The floor of it was about sixteen feet by twelve; its furniture rude and scanty. To the right of the fire was a bed, the four posts of which ran up to the low roof; it was curtained with straw mats, with the exception of an opening about a foot and a half wide on the side next the fire, through which those who slept in it passed. A little below the foot of the bed were ranged a few shelves of deal, supported by pins of wood driven into the wall. These constituted the dresser. In the lower end of the house stood a potato-bin, made up of stakes driven into the floor, and wrought with strong wickerwork. Tied to another stake beside this bin stood a cow, whose hinder part projected so close to the door that those who entered the cabin were compelled to push her over out o their way. This, indeed, was effected without much difficulty, for the animal became so habituated to the necessity of moving aside that it was only necessary to lay the hand upon her. Above the door in the inside, almost touching the roof, was the hen-roost, made also of wickerwork; and opposite the bed, on the other side of the fire, stood a meal chest, its lid on a level with the little pane of glass which served as a window. An old straw chair, a few stools, a couple of pots, some wooden vessels and crockery, completed the furniture of the house. The pig to which Sheelah alluded was not kept within the cabin, that filthy custom being now altogether obsolete.

This catalogue of cottage furniture may appear to our English readers very miserable. We beg them to believe, however, that if every cabin in Ireland were equally comfortable, the country would be comparatively happy. Still it is to be remembered that the *dramatis personæ* of our story are of the humblest class.

When seven o'clock drew nigh, the inmates of this little cabin placed themselves at a clear fire; the father on one side, the mother at the other, and the daughter directly between them, knitting, for this is usually the occupation of a female on such a night. Everything in the house was clear; the floor swept, the ashes removed from the hearth, the parents in their best clothes, and the daughter also in her holiday apparel. She was a plain girl, neither remarkable for beauty nor otherwise. Her eyes, however, were good, so were her teeth, and an anxious look, produced of course by an occasion so interesting to a female, heightened her complexion to a blush that became her. The creature had certainly made the most of her little finery. Her face shone like that of a child after a fresh scrubbing with a strong towel; her hair, carefully curled with the hot blade of a knife, had been smoothed with soap until it became lustrous by repeated polishing, and her best red ribbon was tied tightly about it in a smart knot, that stood out on the side of her head with something of a coquettish air. Old

Donovan and his wife maintained a conversation upon some indifferent subject, but the daughter evidently paid little attention to what they said. It being near the hour appointed for Phelim's arrival, she sat with an appearance of watchful trepidation, occasionally listening, and starting at every sound that she thought bore any resemblance to a man's voice or footstep.

At length the approach of Phelim and his father was announced by a verse of a popular song, for singing which Phelim was famous.

> "'A sailor coorted a farmer's daughter
> That lived *contagious* to the Isle of Man.
> A long time coortin', an' still discoorsin'
> Of things consarnin' the ocean wide;
> At linth he saize, 'Me own dearest darlint,
> Will you consint for to be me bride?'

"An' so she'd did consint, the darlin', but what the puck would she do else? God save the family! Paddy Donovan, how is your health? Molly, avourneen, I'm glad to hear that you're thrivin'. An' Peggy—eh! Ah, be gorra, fadher, here's somethin' to look at! Give us the hand of you, you bloomer! Och, och! faith, you're the daisy!"

"Phelim," said the father, "will you behave yourself? Haven't you the night before you for your capers. Paddy Donovan, I'm glad to see you! Molly, give us your right hand, for, in throth, I have a regard for you! Peggy, dear, how are you? But I'm sure I needn't be axin' when I look at you! In throth, Phelim, she *is* somethin' to throw your eye at."

"Larry Toole, you're welcome," replied Donovan and his wife, "an' so is your son. Take stools, both of you, an' draw near the hearth. Here, Phelim," said the latter, "draw in an' sit beside myself."

"Thank you kindly, Molly," replied Phelim; "but I'll do no sich thing. Arrah, do you think, now, that I'd begin to gosther wid an ould woman, while I have the likes o'Peggy, the darlin', beside me? I'm up to a thrick worth nine of it. No, no; this chest 'll do. Sure, you know, I must help the 'duck of diamonds' here to count her stitches."

"Paddy," said Larry, in a friendly whisper, "put this whisky past for a while, barrin' this bottle that we must taste for good luck. Sam Appleton's to come up afther us, an' I suppose some o' your own *cleaveens* 'ill be here after a while."

"Thrue for you," said Donovan. "Jemmy Burn and Antony Devlin is to come over presently. But, Larry, this is nonsense. One bottle o' whisky was lashins; my goodness, what'll we be doin' wid a whole gallon?"

"Dacency or nothin', Paddy; if it was my last I'd show sperit, an' why not? Who'd be for the shabby thing?"

"Well, well, Larry, I can't say but you're right, afther all! Maybe I'd do the same thing myself, for all I'm spakin' aginst it."

The old people then passed round an introductory glass, after which they chatted away for an hour or so, somewhat like the members

of a committee who talk upon indifferent topics until their brethren are all assembled.

Phelim, in the meantime, grappled with the daughter, whose knitting he spoiled by hooking the thread with his finger, jogging her elbow until he ran the needles past each other, and finally unravelling her clue; all which she bore with great good-humour. Sometimes, indeed, she ventured to give him a thwack upon the shoulder, with a laughing frown upon her countenance, in order to correct him for teasing her.

When Jemmy Burn and Antony Devlin arrived the spirits of the party got up. The whisky was formally produced, but as yet the subject of the courtship, though perfectly understood, was not introduced. Phelim and the father were anxious to await the presence of Sam Appleton, who was considered, by the way, a first-rate hand at match-making.

Phelim, as is the wont, on finding the din of the conversation raised to the proper pitch, stole one of the bottles, and prevailed on Peggy to adjourn with him to the potato-bin. Here they ensconced themselves very snugly; but not, as might be supposed, contrary to the knowledge and consent of the seniors, who winked at each other on seeing Phelim gallantly tow her down with the bottle under his arm. It was only the common usage on such occasions, and not considered any violation whatsoever of decorum. When Phelim's prior engagements are considered, it must be admitted that there was something singularly ludicrous in the humorous look he gave over his shoulder at the company as he went toward the bin, having the bottom of the whisky bottle projecting behind his elbow, winking at them in return, by way of a hint to mind their own business and allow him to plead for himself. The bin, however, turned out to be rather an uneasy seat, for as the potatoes lay in a slanting heap against the wall, Phelim and his sweetheart were perpetually sliding down from the top to the bottom. Phelim could be industrious when it suited his pleasure. In a few minutes those who sat about the fire imagined, from the noise at the bin, that the house was about to come about their ears.

"Phelim, you thief," said the father, "what's all that noise for?"

"*Chrosh orrin!*" said Molly Donovan, "is that tundher?"

"Devil carry these piatees," exclaimed Phelim, raking them down with both hands and all his might, "if there's any sittin' at all upon them! I'm levellin' them to prevint Peggy, the darlin', from slidderin', an' to give us time to be talkin' somethin' lovin' to one another. The curse o' Cromwell an them! One might as well dhrink a glass o' whisky wid his sweetheart, or spake a tindher word to her, on the wings of a windmill as here. There, now they're as level as you plase, acushla! Sit down, you jewel, you, an' give me the egg-shell, till we have a sup o' the crathur in comfort. Faith, it was too soon for us to be comin' down in the world!"

Phelim and Peggy, having each emptied the egg-shell, which among the poorer Irish is frequently the substitute for a glass, entered into

the following sentimental dialogue, which was covered by the loud and entangled conversation of their friends about the fire; Phelim's arm lovingly about her neck, and his head laid down snugly against her cheek.

"Now, Peggy, you darlin' o' the world—bad cess to me but I'm as glad as two tenpennies that I levelled these piatees; there was no sittin' an them. Eh, avourneen?"

"Why, we're comfortable now, anyhow, Phelim!"

"Faith, you may say that"—(a loving squeeze). "Now, Peggy, begin an' tell us all about your bachelors."

"The sarra one ever I had, Phelim."

"Oh, murdher sheery, what a bounce! Bad cess to me, if you can spake a word o' thruth afther that, you common desaver! Worn't you an' Paddy Moran pullin' a coard?"

"No, in throth; it was given out on us, but we never wor, Phelim. Nothin' ever passed betune us but common civility. He thrated my father an' mother wanst to share of half a pint in the Lammas Fair, when I was along wid them; but he never broke discoorse wid me, barrin', as I sed, in civility an' friendship."

"An' do you mane to put it down my throath that you never had a sweetheart at all?"

"The nerra one."

"Oh, you thief! Wid two sich lips o' your own, an' two sich eyes o' your own, and two sich cheeks o' your own! Oh, by the tarn, that won't pass."

"Well, an' supposin' I had—behave, Phelim—supposin' I had, where's the harm? Sure, it's well known all the sweethearts you had, an' yet have, I suppose."

"Be gorra, an' that's thruth; an' the more the merrier, you jewel, you, till one get's marrid. I had enough o' them in my day, but you're the flower o' them all, that I'd like to spend my life wid"—(a squeeze).

"The sarra one word the men say a body can trust. I warrant you tould that story to every one o' them as well as to me. Stop, Phelim—it's well known that what you say to the colleens is no gospel. You know what they christened you 'Bouncin' Phelim' for."

"Betune you an' me, Peggy, I'll tell you a sacret; I *was* the boy for deludin' them. It's very well known the matches I might a' got; but you see, you little shaver, it was waitin' for yourself I was."

"For me! A purty story, indeed! I'm sure it was! Oh, afther that! Why, Phelim, how can you——Well, well, did anyone ever hear the likes?"

"Be the vestments, it's thruth. I had you in my eye these three years, but was waitin' till I'd get together as much money as ud set us up in the world dacently. Give me that egg-shell agin. Talkin's druthy work. *Shudorth, a rogarah!* an' a pleasant honeymoon to us!"

"Wait till we're marrid first, Phelim; thin it'll be time enough to dhrink *that*."

"Come, acushla, it's your turn now; taste the shell, an' you'll see how lovin' it'll make us. Mother's milk's a thrifle to it."

"Well, if I take this, Phelim, I'll not touch another dhrop to-night. In the manetime, here's whatever's best for us! Whoo! Oh, my! but that's strong! I dunna how the people can dhrink so much of it!"

"Faith, nor me; except bekase they have a regard for it, an' that it's worth havin' a regard for, jist like yourself an' me. Upon my faix, Peggy, it bates all, the love an' likin' I have for you, an' ever had these three years past. I tould you about the eyes, mavourneen, an'—an'—about the lips ——"

"Phelim—behave—I say—now stop wid you—well—well—but you're the tazin' Phelim!—Throth! the girls may be glad when you're marrid," exclaimed Peggy, adjusting her polished hair.

"Bad cess to the bit, if ever I got so sweet a one in my life—the soft end of a honeycomb's a fool to it. One thing, Peggy, I can tell you—that I'll love you in great style. Whin we're marrid it's I that'll soodher you up. I won't let the wind blow on you. You must give up workin', too. All I'll ax you to do will be to nurse the childhre; an' that same will keep you busy enough, plase goodness."

"Upon my faix, Phelim, you're the very sarra, so you are. Will you be asy now! I'll engage when you're marrid it'll soon be another story wid you. Maybe you'd care little about us thin!"

"Be the vestments, I'm spaking pure gospel, so I am. Sure you don't know that to be good husbands *runs* in our family. Every one o' them was as sweet as thracle to their wives. Why, there's that ould cock, my fadher, an' if you'd see how he butthers up the ould woman to this day, it ud make your heart warm to any man o' the family."

"Ould an' young was ever an' always the same to you, Phelim. Sure the ouldest woman in the parish, if she happened to be single, couldn't miss of your blarney. It's reported you're going to be marrid to an ould woman."

"He—hem—ahem! Bad luck to this cowld I have! It's stickin' in my throath entirely, so it is!—hem!—to a what?"

"Why, to an ould woman wid a great deal o' the hard goold!"

Phelim put his hand instinctively to his waistcoat-pocket, in which he carried the housekeeper's money.

"Would you oblige one wid her name?"

"You know ould Molly Kavanagh well enough, Phelim."

Phelim put up an inward ejaculation of thanks.

"To the sarra wid her, an' all sasoned women! God be praised—that the night's fine, anyhow! Hand me the shell, and we'll take a *gaudiogue* aich, an' afther that we'll begin an' talk over how lovin' an' fond o' one another we'll be."

"You're takin' too much o' the whisky, Phelim. Oh, for goodness' sake!—oh—b—b—n—now be asy. Faix, I'll go to the fire, an' lave you altogether, so I will, if you don't give over slustherin' me that way, an' stoppin' my breath."

"Here's all happiness to our two selves, acushla machree! Now thry another *gauliogue*, an' you'll see how deludin' it'll make you."

"Not a sup, Phelim."

"Arrah, nonsense! Be the vestments, it's as harmless as new milk from the cow. It'll only do you good, alanna. Come now, Peggy, don't be ondacent, an' it our first night's coortin'! Blood alive! don't make little o' my father's son on sich a night, an' us at business like this, anyhow!

"Phelim, by the crass, I won't take it; so that ends it. Do you want to make little o' me? It's not much you'd think o' me in your mind, if I'd dhrink it."

"The shell's not half full."

"I wouldn't brake my oath for all the whisky in the kingdom; so don't ax me. It's neither right nor proper of you to force it an me."

"Well, all I say is that it's makin' little of one Phelim O'Toole, that hasn't a thought in his body but what's over head an' ears in love wid you. I must only dhrink it for you myself, thin. Here's all kinds o' good fortune to us! Now, Peggy—sit closer to me acushla!—Now, Peggy, are you fond o' me at all? Tell thruth now."

"Fond o' you! Sure you know all the girls is fond of you. Aren't you 'the boy for deludin' them'?—ha, ha, ha!"

"Come, come, you shaver; that won't do. Be sarous. If you knew how my heart's warmin' to you this minute, you'd fall in love wid my shadow. Come, now, out wid it. Are you fond of a sartin boy not far from you, called Bouncin' Phelim?"

"To be sure I am. Are you satisfied now? Phelim! I say ——"

"Faith, it won't pass, avourneen. That's not the voice for it. Don't you hear *me*, how tendher I spake wid my mouth brathin' into your ear, acushla machree? Now turn about, like a purty entisin' girl as you are, an' put *your sweet bill* to my ear the same way, an' whisper what you know into it? That's a darlin'! Will you, achora?"

"An' maybe all this time you're promised to another?"

"Be the vestments, I'm not promised to one. Now! Saize the one!"

"You'll say that, anyhow!"

"Do you see my hands acrass? Be thim five crasses, I'm not promised to a girl livin', so I'm not, nor wouldn't, bekase I had you in my eye. Now will you tell me what I'm wantin' you? The grace o' heaven light down an you, an' be a good, coaxin' darlin' for wanst! Be this an' be that, if ever you heerd or seen sich doins an' times as we'll have when we're marrid. Now the weeny whisper, *a colleen dhas!*"

"It's time enough yet to let you know my mind, Phelim. If you behave yourself an' be——Why, thin, is it at the bottle agin you are? Now don't dhrink so much, Phelim, or it'll get into your head. I was sayin' that if you behave yourself, an' be a good boy, I may tell you somethin' soon."

"Somethin' soon! Live horse, an' you'll get grass! Peggy, if that's the way wid you, the love's all on my side, I see clearly. Are you willin' to marry me, anyhow?"

"I'm willin' to do whatsomever my father an' mother wishes."

"*I'm* for havin' the weddin' off-hand; an', of coorse, if we agree to-night, I think our best plan is to have ourselves called on Sunday. An' I'll tell you what, avourneen,—be the holy vestments, if I was to be 'called' to fifty on the same Sunday, you're the darlin' I'd marry."

"Phelim, it's time for us to go up to the fire; we're long enough here. I thought you had only three words to say to me."

"Why, if you're tired o' me, Peggy, I don't want you to stop. I wouldn't force myself on the best girl that ever stepped."

"Sure you have tould me all you want to say, an' there's no use in us stayin' here. You know, Phelim, there's not a girl in the parish ud believe a word that ud come out o' your lips. Sure there's none o' them but you coorted one time or other. If you could get betther, Phelim, I dunna whether you'd be here to-night at all or not."

"Answer me this, Peggy. What do you think your father ud be willin' to give you? Not that I care a *crona baun* about it, for I'd marry you wid an inch of candle."

"You know my father's but a poor man, Phelim, an' can give little or nothin'. Them that won't marry me as I am needn't come here to look for a fortune."

"I know that, Peggy, an' be the same a token, I want no fortune at all wid you but yourself, darlin'. In the manetime, to show you that I *could* get a fortune—*Dher a Lorha Heena*, I could have a wife wid a hundhre an' twenty guineas!"

Peggy received this intelligence much in the same manner as Larry and Sheelah had received it. Her mirth was absolutely boisterous for at least ten minutes. Indeed, so loud had it been, that Larry and her father could not help asking:

"Arrah, what's the fun, Peggy achora?"

"Oh, nothin'," she replied, "but one o' Phelim's bounces."

"Now," said Phelim, "you won't believe me! Be all the books——"

Peggy's mirth prevented his oaths from being heard. In vain he declared, protested, and swore. On this occasion he was compelled to experience the fate peculiar to all liars. Even truth, from his lips, was looked upon as falsehood.

Phelim, on finding that he could neither extort from Peggy an acknowledgment of love, nor make himself credible upon the subject of the large fortune, saw that he had nothing for it now, in order to produce an impression, but the pathetic.

"Well," said he, "you may lave me, Peggy achora, if you like; but out o' this *I'll* not budge, wid a blessin', till I cry my skinful, so I won't. Saize the toe I'll move, now, till I'm sick wid cryin'! Oh, murdher alive, this night! Isn't it a poor case entirely, that the girl I'd suffer myself to be turned inside out for won't say that she cares about a hair o' my head! Oh, thin, but I'm the misfortunate blackguard all out! Och, oh! Peggy achora, you'll break my heart! Hand me that shell, acushla—for I'm in the height of affliction!"

Peggy could neither withhold it nor reply to him. Her mirth was

even more intense now than before; nor, if all were known, was Phelim less affected with secret laughter than Peggy.

"Is it makin' fun o' me you are you thief. Eh?—Is it laughin' at my grief you are?" exclaimed Phelim. "Be the tarn' o' war, I'll punish you for that."

Peggy attempted to escape, but Phelim succeeded, ere she went, in taking a salutation or two, after which both joined those who sat at the fire, and in a few minutes Sam Appleton entered.

Much serious conversation had already passed in reference to the courtship, which was finally entered into and debated, *pro* and *con*.

"Now, Paddy Donovan, that we're altogether, let me tell you one thing—there's not a betther-natur'd boy, nor a stouther, claner young fellow in the parish, than *my* Phelim. He'll make your daughther as good a husband as ever broke bread!"

"I'm not sayin' aginst that, Larry. He *is* a good-nathured boy: but I tell you, Larry Toole, *my* daughther's his fill of a wife any day. An' I'll put this to the back o' that—she's a hard-workin' girl, that ates no idle bread."

"Very right," said Sam Appleton. "Phelim's a hairo, an she's a beauty. Dang me, but they wor made for one another. Phelim, abouchal, why don't you—oh, I see you are. Why, I was goin' to bid you make up to her."

"Give no gosther, Sam," replied Phelim, "but sind round the bottle, an' don't forget to let it come this way. I hardly tasted a dhrop to-night."

"Oh, Phelim!" exclaimed Peggy.

"Whisht!" said Phelim, "there's no use in lettin' the ould fellows be committin' sin. Why, they're *hearty* [1] as it is, the sinners."

"Come, nabours," said Burn, "I'm the boy that's for close work. How does the match stand? You're both my friends, an' may this be poison to me, but I'll spake like an honest man for the one as well as for the other."

"Well, then," said Donovan, "how is Phelim to support my daughther, Larry? Sure that's a fair questin', anyway."

"Why, Paddy," replied Larry, "when Phelim gets her, he'll have a patch of his own, as well as another. There's that 'half acre,' and a betther piece o' land isn't in Europe!"

"Well, but what plenishin' are they to have, Larry? A bare half acre's but a poor look up."

"I'd as soon you'd not make little of it, in the manetime,' replied Larry, rather warmly. "As good a couple as ever they wor lived on that half acre: along wid what they earned by hard work otherwise."

"I'm not disparagin' it, Larry; I'd be long sorry; but about the furniture. What are they to begin the world wid?"

"Hut," said Devlin, "go to the sarra wid yees?—What ud they want, no more nor other young people like them, to begin the world wid? Are you goin' to make English or Scotch of them, that never

[1] Tipsy.

marries till they're able to buy a farm an' stock it, the nagers. By the staff in my hand, an Irishman ud lash a dozen o' them, wid all their prudence! Hasn't Phelim an' Peggy health and hands, what most new-married couples in Ireland begins the world wid? Sure they're not worse nor a thousand others?"

"Success, Antony," said Phelim; "here's your health for that!"

"God be thanked, they have health an' hands," said Donovan. "Still, Antony, I'd like that they'd have somethin' more."

"Well, then, Paddy, spake up for yourself," observed Larry. "What will you put to the fore for the colleen? Don't take both flesh an' bone!"

"I'll not spake up, till I know all that Phelim's to expect," said Donovan. "I don't think he has a right to be axin' anything wid sich a girl as *my* Peggy."

"Hut, tut, Paddy! She's a good colleen enough; but do you think she's above anyone that carries the name of O'Toole upon him? Still it's but raisonable for you to wish the girl well settled. *My* Phelim will have one half o' my worldly goods, at all evints."

"Name them, Larry, i' you plase."

"Why, he'll have one o' the goats; the grey one, for she's the best o' the two, in throth. He'll have two stools; three hens, an' a toss up for the cock. The biggest o' the two pots: two good crocks; three good wooden trenchers, an'—hem—he'll have his own—I say, Paddy, are you listenin' to me?—Phelim, do you hear what I'm givin' you, *a veehonee?—his own bed!* An' there's all I can or will do for him. Now do you spake up for Peggy."

"I'm to have my own bedstead too;" said Phelim, "an' bad cess to the stouter one in Europe. It's as good this minute as it was eighteen years agone."

"Paddy Donovan, spake up," said Larry.

"Spake up!" said Paddy, contemptuously. "Is it for three crowns' worth I'd spake up? The bedstead, Phelim! *Bedhu husht*, man!"

"Put round the bottle," said Phelim, "we're dhry here."

"Thrue enough, Phelim," said the father. "Paddy, here's towarst you an' yours—nabours, all your healths—young couple! Paddy, give us your hand, man alive! Sure, whether we agree or not, this won't put between us."

"Throth, it won't, Larry—an' I'm thankful to you. Your health, Larry, an' all your healths! Phelim an' Peggy, success to yees, whether or not! An' now, in regard o' your civility, *I will* spake up. My proposal is this:—I'll put down guinea for guinea wid you."

Now we must observe, by the way, that this was said under the firm conviction that neither Phelim nor the father had a guinea in their possession.

"I'll do the same, Paddy," said Larry; "but I'll lave it to the present company if you're not bound to put down the *first* guinea. Nabours, amn't I right?"

"You are right, Larry," said Burn, "it's but fair that Paddy should put down the first."

"Molly achora," said Donovan to the wife, who, by the way, was engaged in preparing the little feast usual on such occasions—"Molly achora, give me that ould glove you have in your pocket."

She immediately handed him an old shammy glove, tied up into a hard knot, which he felt some difficulty in unloosing.

"Come, Larry," said he, laying down a guinea note, "cover that like a man."

"Phelim carries my purse," observed the father; but he had scarcely spoken when the laughter of the company rang loudly through the house. The triumph of Donovan appeared to be complete, for he thought the father's allusion to Phelim tantamount to an evasion.

"Phelim! Phelim carries it! Faix, an' I doubt he finds it a light burdyeen."

Phelim approached in all his glory.

"What am I to do?" he inquired, with a swagger.

"You're to cover that guinea note wid a guinea, if you can," said Donovan.

"Whether ud you prefar goold or notes," said Phelim, looking pompously about him; "that's the talk."

This was received with another merry peal of laughter.

"Oh, goold—goold by all manes!" replied Donovan.

"Here goes the goold, my worthy," said Phelim, laying down his guinea with a firm slap upon the table.

Old Donovan seized it, examined it, then sent it round, to satisfy himself that it was a *bonâ fide* guinea.

On finding that it was good he became blank a little; his laugh lost its strength, much of his jollity was instantly neutralised, and his face got at least two inches longer. Larry now had the laugh against him, and the company heartily joined in it.

"Come, Paddy," said Larry, "go an!—ha, ha, na!"

Paddy fished for half a minute through the glove; and, after what was apparently a hard chase, brought up another guinea, which he laid down.

"Come, Phelim!" said he, and his eye brightened again with a hope that Phelim would fail.

"Good agin!" said Phelim, thundering down another, which was instantly subjected to a similar scrutiny.

"You'll find it good," said Larry. "I wish we had a sackful o' them. Go an, Paddy. Go an, man, who's afeard?"

"Sowl, I'm done," said Donovan, throwing down the purse with a hearty laugh—"give me your hand, Larry. Be the goold afore us, I thought to do you. Sure these two guineas is for my rint, an' we mustn't let them come atween us at all."

"Now," said Larry, "to let you see that my son's not widout something to begin the world wid—Phelim, shill out the rest o' the yallow boys."

"Faix, you ought to dhrink the ould woman's health for this," said Phelim. "Poor ould crathur, many a long day she was saving up these for me. It's my mother I'm speakin' about."

"An' we will, too," said the father; "here's *Sheelah's* health, neighbours! The best poor man's wife that ever *threwn* a gown over her shouldher."

This was drank with all the honours, and the negotiation proceeded.

"Now," said Appleton, "what's to be done? Paddy, say what you'll do for the girl."

"Money's all talk," said Donovan; "I'll give the girl the two-year old heifer — an' that's worth double what his father has promised Phelim; I'll give her a stone o' flax, a dacent suit o' clo'es, my blessin' —an' there's her fortune."

"Has she neither bed nor beddin'?" inquired Larry.

"Why, don't you say that Phelim's to have his own bed?" observed Donovan. "Sure one bed 'ill be plenty for them."

"I don't care a damn about fortune," said Phelim, for the first time taking a part in the bargain—"so long as I get the darlin' herself. But I think there ud be no harm in havin' a spare pair o' blankets—an', for that matther, a bedstead, too—in case a friend came to see a body."

"I don't much mind givin' you a *brother* to the bedstead you have, Phelim," replied Donovan, winking at the company, for he was perfectly aware of the nature of Phelim's bedstead.

"I'll tell you what you must do," said Larry, "otherwise I'll not stand it. Give the colleen a chaff bed, blankets, an' all other parts complate, along wid that slip of a pig. If you don't do this, Paddy Donovan, why we'll finish the whisky, an' part friends—but it's no match."

"I'll never do it, Larry, The bed an' beddin' I'll give; but the pig I'll by no manner o' manes part wid."

"Put round the bottle," said Phelim, "we're gettin' dhry agin—saying nothin' is dhroothy work. Ould man, will you not bother us about fortune!"

"Come, Paddy Donovan," said Devlin, "dang it, let out a little, considher he has ten guineas; an' I give it as my downright maxim an' opinion that he's fairly entitled to the pig."

"You're welcome to give your opinion, Antony, an' I'm welcome not to care a rotten sthraw about it. *My* daughther's wife enough for him, widout a gown to her back, if he had his ten guineas doubled."

"An' *my* son," said Larry, "is husband enough for a betther girl nor ever called you father—not makin' little, at the same time, of either you or her."

"Paddy," said Burn, "there's no use in spakin' that way. I agree wid Antony that you ought to throw in the 'slip.'"

"Is it what I have to pay my next gale o' rint wid? No, no! If he won't marry her widout it, she'll get as good that will."

"Saize the 'slip,'" said Phelim, "the darlin' herself here is all the slip I want."

"But I'm not so," said Larry, "the 'slip' must go in, or it's a brake off. Phelim can get girls that has money enough to buy us all out o' root. Did you hear *that*, Paddy Donovan?"

"I hear it," said Paddy, "but I'll b'lieve as much of it as I like"

Phelim apprehended that, as his father got warm with the liquor he might, in vindicating the truth of his own assertion, divulge the affair of the old housekeeper.

"Ould man," said he, "have sinse, an' pass that over, if you have any regard for Phelim."

"I'd not be brow-bate into anything," observed Donovan.

"Sowl, you would not," said Phelim; "for my part, Paddy, I'm ready to marry your daughther [a squeeze to Peggy] widout a ha'p'orth at all, barrin' herself. It's the girl I want, an' not the slip."

"Thin, be the book, you'll get both, Phelim, for your dacency," said Donovan; "but, you see, I wouldn't be bullied into puttin' one foot past the other, for the best man that ever stepped on black leather."

"Whisht!" said Appleton, "that's the go! Success, ould heart! Give us your hand, Paddy; here's your good health, an' may you never button an empty pocket!"

"Is all settled?" inquired Molly.

"All but about the weddin' an' the calls," replied her husband. "How are we to do about that, Larry?"

"Why, in the name o' goodness, to save time," he replied, "let them be called on Sunday next, the two Sundays afther, an' thin marrid, wid a blessin'."

"I agree wid that entirely," observed Molly; "an' now, Phelim, clear away, you an' Peggy, off o' that chist, till we have our bit o' supper in comfort."

"Phelim," said Larry, "when the supper's done, you must slip over to Roche's for a couple o' bottles more o' whisky. We'll make a night of it."

"There's two bottles in the house," said Donovan; "an', be the saikerment, the first man that talks of bringin' in more, till these is dhrunk, is ondacent."

This was decisive. In the meantime the chest was turned into a table, the supper laid, and the attack commenced. All was pleasure, fun, and friendship. The reader may be assured that Phelim, during the negotiation, had not misspent the time with Peggy. Their conversation, however, was in a tone too low to be heard by those who were themselves talking loudly.

One thing, however, Phelim understood from his friend Sam Appleton, which was that some clue had been discovered to an outrage in which he (Appleton) had been concerned. Above all other subjects, that was one on which Phelim was but a poor comforter. He himself found circumspection necessary; and he told Appleton that if ever danger approached him, he had resolved either to enlist, or to go to America, if he could command the money.

"*You* ought to do that immediately," added Phelim.

"Where's the money?" replied the other.

I don't know," said Phelim; "but if I was bent on goin', the want

of money wouldn't stop me, as long as it could be found in the counthry. We had to do as bad for others, an' it can't be a greater sin to do that much for ourselves."

"I'll thin kof it," said Appleton. "At any rate, it's in for a penny, in for a pound, wid me."

When supper was over they resumed their drinking, sang songs, and told anecdotes with great glee and hilarity. Phelim and Peggy danced jigs and reels, whilst Appleton sang for them, and the bottle also did its duty.

On separating about two o'clock there was not a sober man among them but Appleton. He declined drinking, and was backed in his abstemiousness by Phelim, who knew that sobriety on the part of Sam would leave himself more liquor. Phelim, therefore, drank for them both, and that to such excess that Larry, by Appleton's advice, left him at his father's, in consequence of his inability to proceed homewards. It was not, however, without serious trouble that Appleton could get Phelim and the father separated; and when he did, Larry's grief was bitter in the extreme. By much entreaty, joined to some vigorous shoves towards the door, he was prevailed upon to depart without him; but the old man compensated for the son's absence by indulging in the most vociferous sorrow as he went along, about "*his* Phelim." When he reached home his grief burst out afresh; he slapped the palms of his hands together, and indulged in a continuous howl, that one on hearing it would imagine to be the very echo of misery. When he had fatigued himself he fell asleep on the bed, without having undressed, where he lay until near nine o'clock the next morning. Having got up and dreakfasted, he related to his wife, with an aching head, the result of the last night's proceedings. Everything, he assured her, was settled; Phelim and Peggy were to be called the following Sunday, as Phelim, he supposed, had already informed her.

"Where's Phelim?" said the wife; "an' why didn't he come home wid you last night?"

"Where is Phelim? Why, Sheelah woman, sure he *did* come home wid me last night?"

"*Chrush orrin*, Larry, no! What could happen him? Why, man, I thought you knew where he was; an' in regard of his bein' abroad so often at night, myself didn't think it sthrange."

Phelim's absence astounded them both, particularly the father, who had altogether forgotten everything that had happened on the preceding night after the period of his intoxication. He proposed to go back to Donovan's to inquire for him, and was about to proceed there when Phelim made his appearance, dressed in his own tender apparel only. His face was three inches longer than usual, and the droop in his eye remarkably conspicuous.

"No fear of him," said the father: "here's himself. Arrah, Phelim, what became of you last night? Where wor you?"

Phelim sat down very deliberately and calmly, looked dismally at his mother, and then looked more dismally at his father.

"I suppose you're sick too, Phelim," said the father. "*My* head's goin' round like a top."

"Ate your breakfast," said his mother; "it's the best thing for you."

"Where wor you last night, Phelim?" inquired the father.

"What are you sayin', ould man?"

"Who wor you wid last night?"

"Do, Phelim," said the mother; "tell us, aroon. I hope it wasn't *out* you wor. Tell us, avourneen?"

"Ould woman, what are you talkin' about?"

Phelim whistled "*Ulican dho oh*," or the "Song of Sorrow." At length he bounced to his feet, and exclaimed in a loud, rapid voice—

"*Ma chuirp an diouol!* ould couple, but I'm robbed of my ten guineas by Sam Appleton!"

"Robbed by Sam Appleton! Heavens above!" exclaimed the father.

"Robbed by Sam Appleton! *Gra machree*, Phelim! no, you aren't!" exclaimed the mother.

"*Gra machree yourself*, but I say I am," replied Phelim; "robbed clane of every penny of it?"

Phelim then sat down to breakfast—for he was one of those happy mortals whose appetite is rather sharpened by affliction—and immediately related to his father and mother the necessity which Appleton's connection had imposed on him of leaving the country; adding, that while he was in a state of intoxication he had been stripped of Appleton's clothes. that his own were left beside him; that when he awoke the next morning he found his borrowed suit gone; that on searching for his own he found, to his misery, that the ten guineas had disappeared along with Appleton, who, he understood from his father, had "left the neighbourhood for awhile, till the throuble he was in ud pass over."

"But I know where he's gone," said Phelim, "an' may the divil's luck go wid him, an' God's curse on the day I ever had anything to do wid that hell-fire Ribbon business! 'Twas he first brought me into it, the villain; an' now I'd give the townland we're in to be fairly out of it."

"*Hanim an diouol!*" said the father, "is the ten guineas gone? The curse of hell upon him, for a black desaver! Where's the villain, Phelim?"

"He's gone to America," replied the son. "The divil tare the tongue out o' myself, too! I should be puttin' him up to go there, an' to get money, if it was to be had. The villain bit me fairly."

"Well, but how are we to manage?" inquired Larry. "What's to be done?"

"Why," said the other, "to bear it, an' say nothin'. Even if he was in his father's house, the double-faced villain has me so much in his power that I couldn't say a word about it. My curse on the Ribbon business, I say, from my heart out!"

That day was a miserable one to Phelim and the father. The loss

of the ten guineas and the feverish sickness produced by their debauch rendered their situation not enviable. Some other small matters, too, in which Phelim was especially concerned, independent of the awkward situation in which he felt himself respecting the three calls on the following day, which was Sunday, added greater weight to his anxiety. He knew not how to manage, especially upon the subject of his habiliments, which certainly were in a very dilapidated state. An Irishman, however, never despairs. If he has not apparel of his own sufficiently decent to wear on his wedding day, he borrows from a friend. Phelim and his father remembered that there were several neighbours in the village who would oblige him with a suit for the wedding; and as to the other necessary expenses, they did what their countrymen are famous for—they trusted to chance.

"We'll work ourselves out of it some way," said Larry. "Sure if all fails us, we can sell the goats for the weddin' expenses. It's one comfort that Paddy Donovan must find the dinner; an' all we have to get is the whisky, the marriage-money, an' some other thrifles."

"They say," observed Phelim, "that people have more luck whin they're marrid[1] than whin they're single. I'll have a bout at the marriage, so I will; for worse luck I can't have, if I had half a dozen wives, than I always met wid."

"I'll go down," observed Larry, "to Paddy Donovan's an' send him to the priest's to *give in* your names to be called to-morrow. Faith, it's well that you won't have to appear, or I dunna how you'd get over it."

"No," said Phelim, "that bill won't pass. You must go to the priest yourself, an' see the curate: if you go near Father O'Hara, it ud knock a plan on the head that I've invinted. I'm in the notion that I'll make the ould woman bleed agin. I'll squeeze as much out of her as 'ill bring me to America, for I'm not overly safe here; or, if all fails, I'll marry her, an' run away wid the money. It ud bring us all *acrass*."

Larry's interview with the curate was but a short one. He waited on Donovan, however, before he went, who expressed himself satisfied with the arrangement, and looked forward to the marriage as certain. As for Phelim, the idea of being called to three females at the same time was one that tickled his vanity very much. Vanity where the fair sex was concerned had been always his predominant failing. He was not finally determined on marriage with any of them; but he knew that should he even escape the three, the *eclat* resulting from so celebrated a transaction would recommend him to the sex for the remainder of his life. Impressed with this view of the matter, he sauntered about as usual; saw Foodle Flattery's daughter, and understood that her uncle had gone to the priest, to have his niece and worthy Phelim called the next day. But besides this hypothesis Phelim had another, which, after all, was the real one. He hoped

[1] This is another absurd opinion peculiar to the Irish, and certainly one of the most pernicious that prevail among them. Indeed, I believe there is no country in which so many absurd maxims exist.

that the three applications would prevent the priest from calling him at all.

The priest, who possessed much sarcastic humour, on finding the name of Phelim came in as a candidate for marriage honours with three different women, felt considerably puzzled to know what he could be at. That Phelim might hoax one or two of them was very probable but that he should have the effrontery to make *him* the instrument of such an affair he thought a little too bad.

"Now," said he to his curate, as they talked the matter over that night, "it is quite evident that this scapegrace reckons upon our refusing to call him with *any* of those females to-morrow. It is also certain that not one of the three to whom he has pledged himself is aware that he is under similar obligations to the other two."

"How do you intend to act, sir?" inquired the curate.

"Why," said Mr. O'Hara, "certainly to call him to each; it will give the business a turn for which he is not prepared. He will stand exposed, moreover, before the congregation, and that will be some punishment to him."

"I don't know as to the punishment," replied the curate. "If ever a human being was free from shame, Phelim is. The fellow will consider it a joke."

"Very possible," observed his superior; "but I am anxious to punish this old woman. It may prevent her from uniting herself with a fellow who certainly would, on becoming master of her money, immediately abandon her—perhaps proceed to America."

"It will also put the females of the parish on their guard against him," said the innocent curate, who knew not that it would raise him highly in their estimation.

"We will have a scene, at all events," said Mr. O'Hara; "for I'm resolved to expose him. No blame can be attached to those whom he has duped, excepting only the old woman, whose case will certainly excite a great deal of mirth. That matters not, however; she has earned the ridicule, and let her bear it."

It was not until Sunday morning that the three calls occurred to Phelim in a new light. He forgot that the friends of the offended parties might visit upon his proper carcass the contumely he offered to them. This, however, did not give him much anxiety, for Phelim was never more in his element than when entering upon a row.

The Sunday in question was fine, and the congregation unusually large: one would think that all the inhabitants of the parish of Teernarogarah had been assembled. Most of them certainly were.

The priest, after having gone through the usual ceremonies of the Sabbath worship, excepting those with which he concludes the mass, turned round to the congregation, and thus addressed them:—

"I would not," said he, "upon any other occasion of this kind, think it necessary to address you at all; but this is one perfectly *unique*, and in some degree patriarchal, because, my friends, we are informed that it was allowed in the times of Abraham and his successors to keep more than one wife. This custom is about being

revived by a modern, who wants, in rather a barefaced manner, to palm himself upon us as a patriarch. And who do you think, my friends, this Irish patriarch is? Why, no other than Bouncing Phelim O'Toole!"

This was received precisely as the priest had anticipated; loud were the shouts of laughter from all parts of the congregation.

"Divil a fear o' Phelim!" they exclaimed. "He wouldn't be himself or he'd kick up a dust some way."

"Blessed Phelim! Jist like him! Faith, he couldn't be marrid in the common coorse!"

"Arrah, whisht till we hear the name o' the happy crathur that's to be blisthered wid Phelim! The darlin's in luck, whoever she is, an' has gained a blessed prize in the 'bouncer.'"

"This bouncing patriarch," continued the priest, "has made his selection with great judgment and discrimination. In the first place, he has pitched upon a hoary damsel of long standing in the world;—one blessed with age and experience. She is qualified to keep Phelim's house well, as soon as it shall be built; but whether she will be able to keep Phelim himself is another consideration. It is not unlikely that Phelim, in imitation of his great prototypes, may prefer living in a tent. But whether she keeps Phelim or the house, one thing is certain, that Phelim will keep her money. Phelim selected this aged woman, we presume, for her judgment; for surely she who has given such convincing proof of discretion must make a useful partner to one who, like Phelim, has that virtue yet to learn. I have no doubt, however, but in a short time he will be as discreet as his teacher."

"Blood alive! Isn't that fine language?"

"You may say that! Begad, it's himself *can* discoorse! What's the Protestants to that?"

"The next upon the list is one who, though a poor man's daughter, will certainly *bring property* to Phelim. There is also an aptness in this selection which does credit to the 'Patriarch.' Phelim is a great dancer, an accomplishment with which we do not read that the patriarchs themselves were possessed; although we certainly do read that a light heel was of little service to Jacob. Well, Phelim carries a light heel, and the second female of his choice on this list carries a 'light hand;'[1] it is, therefore, but natural to suppose that, if ever they are driven to extremities, they will make light of many things which other people would consider of weighty moment. Whether Phelim and she may long remain stationary in this country is a problem more likely to be solved at the county assizes than here. It is not improbable that his Majesty may recommend the 'Patriarch' and one of his wives to try the benefit of a voyage to New South Wales, he himself graciously vouchsafing to bear their expenses."

"Divil a lie in that, anyhow! If ever anyone crossed the wather, Phelim will. Can't his reverence be funny when he plases?"

[1] Intimating theft.

"Many a time it was prophecized for him; an' his reverence knows best."

"Begad, Phelim's gettin' over the coals. But sure it's all the way the father an' mother reared him."

"Tundher-an'-turf, is he goin' to be called to a pair o' them!"

"Faix, so it seems."

"Oh, the divil's clip! Is he mad? But let us hear it out."

"The third damsel is by no means so well adapted for Phelim as either of the other two. What she could have seen in him is another problem much more difficult than the one I have mentioned. I would advise her to reconsider the subject, and let Phelim have the full benefit of the attention she may bestow upon it. If she finds the 'Patriarch' possessed of but *one* virtue, except *necessity*, I will admit that it is pretty certain that she will soon discover the longitude, and that has puzzled the most learned men of the world. If she marries this 'Patriarch,' I think the angels who may visit him will come in shape of policemen; and that Phelim, so long as he can find a cudgel, will give them anything but a patriarchal reception is another thing of which we may rest pretty certain.

"I now publish the banns of matrimony between Phelim O'Toole of Tcernarogarah and Bridget Doran of Dernascobe. If any person knows of any impediment why these two should not be joined in wedlock, they are bound to declare it.

"This Bridget Doran, my friends, is no other than my old housekeeper; but when, where, or how Phelim could have won upon her juvenile affections is one of those mysteries which is never to be explained. I dare say the match was brought about by despair on her side, and necessity on his. She despaired of getting a husband, and he had a necessity for the money. In point of age I admit she would make a very fit wife for any 'Patriarch.'"

Language could not describe the effect which this disclosure produced upon the congregation. The fancy of everyone present was tickled at the idea of a union between Phelim and the old woman. It was followed by roars of laughter, which lasted several minutes.

"Oh, thin, the curse o' the crows upon him, was he only able to butther up the ould woman! Oh, *Ghe dhiven!* that flogs. Why, it's a wondher he didn't stale the ould slip, an' make a runaway match of it!—ha, ha, ha! Musha, bad scran to her, but she had young notions of her own! A purty bird she picked up in Phelim!—ha, ha, ha!"

"I also publish the banns of matrimony between Phelim O'Toole of Teernarogarah and Sally Flattery of the same place. If any of you know of any impediment why they should not be joined in wedlock, you are bound to declare it."

The mirth rose again loud and general. Foodle Flattery, whose character was so well known, appeared so proper a father-in-law for Phelim that his selection in this instance delighted them highly.

"Betther an' betther, Phelim! More power to you! You're fixed at last. Foodle Flattery's daughter—a known thief! Well, what harm? Phelim himself has pitch on his fingers—or had, anyhow,

when he was growin' up—for many a thing stuck to them. Oh, bedad, now we know what his reverence was at when he talked about the 'Sizes, bad luck to them! Betune her an' the ould woman, Phelim ud be in Paradise! Foodle Flattery's daughter! Begad, she'll 'bring him property' sure enough, as his reverence says."

"I also publish the banns of matrimony between Phelim O'Toole—whom we must in future call the 'Patriarch'—of Teernarogarah, and Peggy Donovan of the same place. If any of you know any impediment in the way of their marriage, you are bound to declare it."

"Bravo! Phelim acushla. 'Tis you that's the blessed youth. Tundher-an'-whisky, did ever anybody hear of such desate? To do three o' them. Be sure the Bouncer has some schame in this. Well, one would suppose Paddy Donovan an' his daughther had more sinse nor to think of sich a runnagate as Bouncin' Phelim."

"No, but the Pathriark! Sure his reverence sez that we mustn't call him anything agin but the Pathriark! Oh, be gorra, that's the name!—ha, ha, ha!"

When the mirth of the congregation had subsided, and their comments ended, the priest concluded in the following words:

"Now, my friends, here is such a piece of profligacy as I have never, in the whole course of my pastoral duties, witnessed. It is the act of Phelim O'Toole, be it known, who did not scruple to engage himself for marriage to three females—that is, to two girls and an old woman—and who, in addition, had the effrontery to send me his name and theirs, to be given out all on the same Sunday; thus making *me* an instrument in his hands to hoax those who trusted in his word. That he can marry but one of them is quite clear; but that he would not scruple to marry the three, and three more to complete the half-dozen, is a fact which no one who knows him will doubt. For my part, I know not how this business may terminate. Of a truth he has contrived to leave the claims of the three females in a state of excellent confusion. Whether it raise or lessen him in their opinion I cannot pretend to determine. I am sorry for Donovan's daughter, for I know not what greater calamity could befall any honest family than a matrimonial union with Phelim O'Toole. I trust that this day's proceedings will operate as a caution to the females of the parish against such an unscrupulous reprobate. It is for this purpose only that I publish the names given in to me. His character was pretty well known before; it is now established; and having established it, I dismiss the subject altogether."

Phelim's fame was now nearly at its height. Never before had such a case been known; yet the people somehow were not so much astonished as might be supposed. On the contrary, had Phelim's courtship gone off like that of another man they would have felt more surprised. We need scarcely say that the "giving out" or "calling" of Phelim and the three damsels was spread over the whole parish before the close of that Sunday. Everyone had it—man, woman, and child. It was told, repeated, and improved as it went along. New circumstances were added, fresh points made out, and other *dramatis*

personæ brought in—all with great felicity, and quite suitable to Phelim's character.

Strongly contrasted with the amusement of the parishioners in general was the indignation felt by the three damsels and their friends. The old housekeeper was perfectly furious ; so much so, indeed, that the priest gave some dark hints at the necessity of sending for a strait waistcoat. Her fellow-servants took the liberty of breaking some strong jests upon her, in return for which she took the liberty of breaking two strong churn-staves upon them. Being a remarkably strong woman for her years, she put forth her strength to such purpose that few of them went to bed without sore bones. The priest was seriously annoyed at it, for he found that his house was a scene of battle during the remainder of the day.

Sally Flattery's uncle, in the absence of her father, indignantly espoused the cause of his niece. He and Donovan each went among their friends to excite in them a proper resentment, and to form a faction for the purpose of chastising Phelim. Their chagrin was bitter on finding that their most wrathful representations of the insult sustained by their families were received with no other spirit than one of the most extravagant mirth. In vain did they rage, and fume, and swear ; they could get no one to take a serious view of it. Phelim O'Toole was the author of all, and from him it was precisely what they had expected.

Phelim himself, and the father, on hearing of the occurrence after mass, were as merry as any other two in the parish. At first the father was disposed to lose his temper ; but on Phelim telling him he would hear no "gosther" on the subject, he thought proper to take it in good humour. About this time they had not more than a week's provision in the house, and only three shillings of capital. The joke of the three calls was too good a one to pass off as an ordinary affair ; they had three shillings, and although it was their last, neither of them could permit the matter to escape as a dry joke. They accordingly repaired to the little public house of the village, where they laughed at the world, got drunk, hugged each other, despised all mankind, and staggered home, ragged and merry, poor and hearty, their arms about each other's necks, perfect models of filial duty and paternal affection.

The reader is aware that the history of Phelim's abrupt engagement with the housekeeper was conveyed by Fool Art to Sally Flattery. Her thievish character rendered marriage as hopeless to her as length of days did to Bridget Doran. No one knew the plan she had laid for Phelim, but this fool ; and in order to secure his silence she had promised him a shirt on the Monday after the first call. Now Art, as was evident by his endless habit of shrugging, felt the necessity of a shirt very strongly.

About ten o'clock on Monday he presented himself to Sally, and claimed his recompense.

"Art," said Sally, "the shirt I intended for you is upon Squire Nugent's hedge beside their garden. You know the family's goin' up to Dublin on Thursday, Art, an' they're gettin' their washin' done in

time to be off. Go down, but don't let anyone see you ; take the third shirt on the row, an' bring it up to me till I smooth it for you."

Art sallied down to the hedge on which the linen had been put out to dry, and having reconnoitred the premises, shrugged himself, and cast a longing eye on the third shirt. With that knavish penetration however, peculiar to such persons, he began to reflect that Sally might have some other object in view besides *his* accommodation. He determined, therefore, to proceed upon new principles—sufficiently safe, he thought, to protect him from the consequences of theft.

"Good morrow, Bush," said Art, addressing that on which the third shirt was spread. "Isn't it a burnin' shame an' a sin for you," he continued, "to have sich a fine white shirt an you, an' me widout a stitch to my back. Will you swap ?"

Having waited until the bush had due time to reply,

"Sorra fairer," he observed ; "silence gives consint."

In less than two minutes he stripped, put on one of the Squire's best shirts, and spread out his own dusky fragment in its place.

"It's a good thing," said Art, "to have a clear conscience ; a fair exchange is no robbery."

Now, it so happened that the Squire himself, who was a humourist, and also a justice of the peace, saw Art putting his morality in practice at the hedge. He immediately walked out with an intention of playing off a trick upon the fool for his dishonesty ; and he felt the greater inclination to do this in consequence of an opinion long current, that Art, though he had outwitted several, had never been outwitted himself.

Art had been always a welcome guest in the Squire's kitchen, and never passed the "Big House," as an Irish country gentleman's residence is termed, without calling. On this occasion, however, he was too cunning to go near it—a fact which the Squire observed. By taking a short cut across one of his own fields he got before Art, and turning the angle of a hedge, met him trotting along at his usual pace.

"Well, Art, where now ?"

"To the crass roads, your honour."

"Art, is not this a fine place of mine? Look at these groves, and the lawn, and the river there, and the mountains behind all. Is it not equal to Sir William R——'s ?" Sir William was Art's favourite patron.

"Sir William, your honour, has all this at his place."

"But I think my views are finer."

"They're fine enough," replied Art ; "*but where's the lake before the door ?*"

The Squire said no more about his prospects.

"Art," he continued, "would you carry a letter for me to M—— ?"

"I'll be wantin' somethin' to dhrink on the way," said Art.

"You shall get something to eat and drink before you go," said the Squire, "and half a crown for your trouble."

"Augh," exclaimed Art, "be dodda, sir, you're nosed like Sir William, and chinned like Captain Taylor." This was always Art's compliment when pleased.

The Squire brought him up to the house, ordered him refreshment, and while Art partook of it, wrote a letter or mittimus to the county gaoler, authorizing him to detain the bearer in prison until he should hear further from him.

Art, having received the half-crown and the letter, appeared delighted; but on hearing the name of the person to whom it was addressed he smelt a trick. He promised faithfully, however, to deliver it, and betrayed no symptoms whatever of suspicion. After getting some distance from the big house, he set his wits to work, and ran over in his mind the names of those who had been most in the habit of annoying him. At the head of this list stood Phelim O'Toole, and on Phelim's head did he resolve to transfer the revenge which the Squire, he had no doubt, intended to take on himself.

With considerable speed he made way to Larry O'Toole's, where such a scene presented itself as made him for a moment forget the immediate purport of his visit.

Opposite Phelim, dressed out in her best finery, stood the housekeeper, zealously insisting on either money or marriage. On one side of him stood old Donovan and his daughter, whom he had forced to come, in the character of a witness, to support his charges against the gay deceiver. On the other were ranged Sally Flattery in tears, and her uncle in wrath, each ready to pounce upon Phelim.

Phelim stood the very emblem of patience and good-humour. When one of them attacked him he winked at the other two; when either of the other two came on he winked still at those who took breath. Sometimes he trod on his father's toe, lest the old fellow might lose the joke, and not unfrequently proposed their going to a public-house, and composing their differences over a bottle, if any of them would pay the expenses.

"What do you mane to do?" said the housekeeper; "but it's asy known I'm an unprotected woman, or I wouldn't be thrated as I am. If I had relations livin' or near me, we'd pay you on the bones for bringin' me to shame and scandal as you have done."

"Upon my *sanies*, Mrs. Doran, I feel for your situation, so I do," said Phelim. "You've outlived all your friends, an' if it was in my power to bring any o' them back to you I'd do it."

"Oh, you desaver, is that the feelin' you have for me, when I thought you'd be a guard an' projection to me? You know I have the money, you sconce, an' how comfortable it ud keep us, if you'd only see what's good for you. You blarnied an' palavered me, you villain, till you got my infections, an' thin you tuck the colic as an excuse to lave me in a state of dissolution an' disparagement. You promised to marry me, an' you had no notion of it."

"You're not the only one he has disgraced, Mrs. Doran," said Donovan. "A purty way he came down, himself an' his father, undher pretence of coortin' my daughter. He should lay down his ten guineas, too, to show us what he had to begin the world wid, the villain!—an' him had no notion of it aither."

"An' he should send this girl to make me go to the priest to have

him and her called, the reprobate," said Nick Flattery; "an' him had no notion of it aither."

"Sure he sent us all there," exclaimed Donovan.

"He did," said the old woman.

"Not a doubt of it," observed Flattery.

"Ten guineas!" said the housekeeper. "An' so you brought my ten guineas in your pocket to coort another girl! Aren't you a right profligate?"

"Yes," said Donovan, "aren't you a right profligate?"

"Answer the dacent people," said Flattery; "aren't you a right profligate?"

"Take the world asy, all of yees," replied Phelim. "Mrs. Doran, there was three of you called, sure enough; but, be the vestments, I intinded—do you hear me, Mrs. Doran? Now have rason—I say, do *you* hear me? Be the vestments, I intinded to marry only *one* of you; an' that I'll do still. except I'm vexed—[a wink at the old woman]. Yet you're all flyin' at me, as if I had three heads upon me."

"Maybe the poor boy's not so much to blame," said Mrs. Doran. "There's hussies in this world," and here she threw an angry eye upon the other two, "that ud give a man no pace till he'd promised to marry them."

"Why did he promise to them that didn't want him thin?" exclaimed Donovan. "I'm not angry that he didn't marry my daughther—for I wouldn't give her to him now—but I am at the slight he put an her."

"Paddy Donovan, did *you* hear what I said jist now?" replied Phelim. "I wish to Jamini some people ud have sinse! Be them five crasses, I know thim I intinded to marry, as well as I do where I'm standin'. That's plain talk, Paddy. I'm sure the world's not past yet, I hope"—[a wink at Paddy Donovan].

"An' wasn't he a big rascal to make little of my brother's daughther as he did?" said Flattery; "but he'll rub his heels together for the same act."

"Nick Flatthery, do you think I could marry three wives? Be that horseshoe over the door, Sally Flatthery, you didn't thrate me dacent. She did not, Nick; an' you ought to know that it was wrong of her to come here to-day."

"Well, but what do you intind to do Phelim, avourn—you profligate?" said the half-angry, half-pacified housekeeper, who, being the veteran, always led on the charge.

"Why, I intind to marry *one* of you," said Phelim. "I say, Mrs. Doran, do you see thim ten fingers acrass—be thim five crasses I'll do what I said, if nothing happens to put it aside."

"Then be an honest man," said Flattery, "an' tell us which o' them you *will* marry."

"Nick, don't you know I always regarded *your* family? If I didn't that I may never do an ill turn! Now! But some people can't see anything. Arra, tundher-an'-whisky, man, would you expect me to tell out, before all that's here, who I'll marry—to be hurtin' the feelins of the rest. Faith, I'll never do a shabby thing."

"What rekimpinse will you make *my* daughther for bringin' down her name afore the whole parish, along wid them she oughtn't to be named in the one day wid?" said Donovan.

"An' who is that, Paddy Donovan?" said the housekeeper, with a face of flame.

"None of your broad hints, Paddy," said Nick. "If it's a collusion to Sally Flattery you mane, take care I don't make you ate your words."

"Paddy," exclaimed Phelim, "you oughtn't to be hurtin' their feelins!"—[a friendly wink to Paddy].

"If you mane me," said the housekeeper, "by the crook on the fire, I'd lave you a mark."

"I mane you for one, thin, since you provoke me," replied Donovan.

"For *one* is it?" said Nick; "an' who's the other, i' you plase?"

"Your brother's daughther," he replied. "Do you think I'd *even*[1] my daughther to a thief?"

"Be gorra," observed Phelim, "that's too provokin', an' what I wouldn't bear. Will yees keep the pace, I say, till I spake a word tc Mrs. Doran? Mrs. Doran, can I have a word or two wid you outside the house?"

"To be sure you can," she replied; "I'd give you fair play, if the *diouol* was in you."

Phelim, accordingly, brought her out, and thus accosted her:

"Now, Mrs. Doran, you think I thrated you ondacent; but do you see that book?" said he, producing a book of ballads, on which he had sworn many a similar oath before. "Be the contints o' that book, as sure as you're beside me, its *you* I intind to marry! These other two—the curse o' the crows upon them! I wish we could get them from about the place—is both dyin' for love o' me, an' I surely did promise to get myself *called* to them. They wanted it to be a promise of marriage; but, says I, 'Sure if we're called together it's the same, for whin it comes to that, all's right'—an' so I tould both o' them, unknownst to one another. Arra, be my sowl, you'd make two like them, so you would; an' if you hadn't a penny, I'd marry you afore aither o' them to-morrow. Now, there's the whole sacret, an' don't be onaisy about it. Tell Father O'Hara how it is, whin you go home, an' that he must call the three o' you to me agin, on next Sunday, and the Sunday afther, plase goodness; jist that I may keep my promise to them. You know I couldn't have luck or grace if I marrid you wid the sin of two broken promises on me."

"My goodness, Phelim, but you tuck a burdyeen off o' me! Faix, you'll see how happy we'll be."

"To be sure we will! But I'm tould you're sometimes crass, Mrs. Doran. Now, you must promise to be kind an' lovin' to the childhre, or, be the vestment, I'll brake off the match yet."

"Och, an' why wouldn't I, Phelim acushla? Sure that's but rason."

"Well, take this book an' swear it. Be gorra, your word won't do,

[1] Compare

for it's a thing my mind's made up on. It's I that'll be fond o' the childhre."

"An' how am I to swear it, Phelim? for I never tuck an oath myself yet."

"Take the book in your hand, shut one eye, and say the words afther me. Be the contints o' this book—"

"Be the contints o' this book—"

"I'll be kind, an' motherly, an' boistherous—"

"I'll be kind, an' motherly, an' boistherous—"

"To my own childhre—"

"To my own childhre—"

"An' never bate or abuse thim—"

"An' never bate or abuse thim—"

"Barrin' whin they desarve it."

"Barrin' whin they desarve it."

"An' this I swear—"

"An' this I swear—"

"In the presence of *St. Phelim.*"

"In the presence of *St. Phelim.*"

"Amin!"

"Amin!"

"Now, Mrs. Doran, acushla, if you could jist know how aisy my conscience is about the childhre, poor crathurs, you'd be in nighty fine spirits. There won't be sich a lovin' husband, begad, in Europe. It's I that'll coax you, an' butther you up like a new pair o' brogues; but, begad, you must be sweeter than liquorice or sugar-candy to me. Won't you, darlin'?"

"Be the crass, Phelim, darlin', jewel, I'll be as kind a wife as ever breathed! Arrah, Phelim, won't you come down to-morrow evenin'? There'll be no one at home but myself, an'—ha, ha, ha!—Oh, you coaxin' rogue! I see you laughin'! Will you come, darlin'?"

"Surely. But, death alive! I was near forgettin'; sure, bad luck to the penny o' the ten guineas but I paid away."

"Paid away! Is it my ten guineas?"

"Your ten guineas, darlin'; an' right well I managed it. Didn't I secure Pat Hanratty's farm by it? Sam Appleton's uncle had it as good as taken: so, begad, I came down wid the ten guineas, by way of airles, an' now we have it. I knew you'd be plased to hear it, an' that you'd be proud to give me ten more for clo'es an' the weddin' expenses. Isn't that good news, avourneen? Eh, you duck o' diamonds? Faith, let Phelim alone! An' another thing—I must call you *Bridget* for the future: it's sweeter an' more lovin'."

"Phelim, I wish you had consulted wid me afore you done it: but it can't be helped. Come down to-morrow evenin', an' we'll see what's to be done."

"The grace o' heaven upon you, but you *are* the winnin'est woman alive this day! Now take my advice, an' go home widout comin' in. I'm wantin' to get this other pair off o' my hands as well as I can; an' our best way is to do all widout noise. Isn't it, darlin?"

"It is, Phelim, jewel; an' I'll go."

"Faith, Bridget, you've dealt in thracle afore now, you're so sweet. Now, acushla, farewell; an' take care of yourself till to-morrow evenin'!"

Phelim, on re-entering his father's cabin, found Larry and Peggy Donovan placed between her father and Flattery, each struggling to keep them asunder. Phelim at first had been anxious to set them by the ears, but his interview with the old woman changed his plan of operations altogether. With some difficulty he succeeded in repressing their tendency to single combat, which having effected, he brought out Flattery and his niece, both of whom he thus addressed:

"Be the vestment, Sally, only that my regard an' love for you is uncommon, I'd brake off the affair altogether, so I would."

"An' why would you do so, Phelim O'Toole?" inquired the uncle.

"Bekase," replied Phelim, "you came here an' made a show of me, when I wished to have no *bruhagh*, at all at all. In regard of Peggy Donovan, I never spoke a word to the girl about marriage since I was christened. Saize the syllable! My father brought me down there to gosther awhile, the other night, an' Paddy sent away for whisky. An' the curse o' Cromwell on myself! I should get tossicated. So while I was half-saes over, the two ould rips set to making the match—planned to have us called—an' me knew nothin' about it, good, bad, or indifferent. That's the thruth, be the sky above us!"

"An' what have you to say about the housekeeper, Phelim?"

"Why, I don't know yet who *done* me there. I was about takin' a farm, an' my father borried ten guineas from her. Somebody heard it—I suspect Sam Appleton—an' gave in our names to the priest, to be called, makin' a good joke of it. All sorts o' luck to them, barrin' good luck, that did it; but they put me in a purty state! But never heed! I'll find them out yet. Now go home, both o' you, an' I'll slip down in half an hour, wid a bottle o' whisky in my pocket. We'll talk over what's to be done. Sure Sally here knows that it's my own intherest to marry her, and no one else."

"If my father thought you would, Phelim, he'd not *stag*, even if he was to crass the wather!"

"Go home, Sally darlin', till I get this mad Donovan an' his daughther away. Be all that's beautiful, I'll be apt to give him a taste o' my shillely, if he doesn't behave himself! Half an hour I'll be down in—wid the bottle; an' don't you go, Nick, till you see me."

"Phelim," said the uncle, "you know how the case is. You must aither marry the girl, or take a long voyage, abouchal. We'll have no bouncin' or palaver."

"Bedad, Nick, I've great patience wid you," said Phelim, smiling: "go off, I say, both of you."

They then proceeded homewards, and Phelim returned to appease the anger of Donovan, as he had that of the others. Fresh fiction was again drawn forth, every word of which the worthy father corroborated. They promised to go down that night and drink another bottle together; a promise which they knew by the state of their

finances it was impossible to fulfil. The prospect of the "booze," however, tranquillized Donovan, who in his heart relished a glass of liquor as well as either Phelim or the father. Shaking of hands and professions of friendship were again beginning to multiply with great rapidity, when Peggy thought proper to make a few observations on the merits of her admirer.

"In regard to me," she observed, "you may save yourselves the throuble o' comin'. I wouldn't marry Phelim, afther what the priest said yistherday, if he had the riches o' the townland we're spakin' in. I never cared for him, nor liked him ; an' it was only to plase my father an' mother that I consinted to be called to him at all. I'll never join myself to the likes of him. If I do, may I be a corpse the next minute !"

Having thus expressed herself, she left her father, Phelim, and Larry to digest her sentiments, and immediately went home.

Donovan, who was outrageous at this contempt of his authority, got his hat, with the intention of compelling her to return and retract in their presence what she had said ; but the daughter, being the more light-footed of the two, reached home before he could overtake her ; where, backed by her mother, she maintained her resolution, and succeeded, ere long, in bringing the father over to her opinion.

During this whole scene in Larry's, Fool Art sat in that wild abstraction which characterises the unhappy class to which he belonged. He muttered to himself, laughed—or rather chuckled—shrugged his shoulders, and appeared to be as unconscious of what had taken place as an automaton. When the coast was clear he rose up, and plucking Phelim's skirt, beckoned him towards the door.

"Phelim," said he, when they had got out, "would you like to earn a crown?"

"Tell me how, Art," said Phelim.

"A letther from the Square to the goaler of M—— goal. If you bring back an answer you'll get a crown, your dinner, an' a quart o' sthrong beer."

"But why don't you bring it yourself, Art?"

"Why, I'm afeard. Sure they'd keep me in gaol, I'm tould, if they'd catch me in it. Aha ! Bedad, I won't go near them : sure they'd hang me for shootin' Bonypart—Aha !"

"Must the answer be brought back to-day, Art?"

"Oh, it wouldn't do to-morrow at all. Be dodda, no ! Five shillins' your dinner, an' a quart o' sthrong beer !—Aha ! But you must give me a shillin' or two to buy a sword ; for the Square's goin' to make me a captain : thin I'll be grand ! an' I'll make you a sargin'."

This seemed a windfall to Phelim. The unpleasant dilemma in which Sally Flattery had placed him, by the fabricated account of her father's imprisonment, made him extremely anxious to see Foodle himself, and to ascertain the *precise* outrage for which he had been secured. Here, then, was an opportunity of an interview with him, and of earning five shillings, a good dinner, and a quart of strong beer, as already specified.

"Art," said he, "give me the letther, an I'm the boy that'll soon do the job. Long life to you, Art! Be the contints o' the book, Art, I'll never pelt you or vex you agin, my worthy; an' I'll always call you captain!"

Phelim immediately commenced his journey to M——, which was only five miles distant, and in a very short time reached the gaol, saw the gaoler, and presented his letter.

The latter, on perusing it, surveyed him with the scrutiny of a man whose eye was practised in scanning offenders.

Phelim, whilst the gaoler examined him, surveyed the strong and massy bolts with which every door and hatchway was secured. Their appearance produced rather an uncomfortable sensation in him; so much so, that when the gaoler asked him his name he thought it more prudent, in consequence of a touch of conscience he had, to personate Art for the present, inasmuch as he felt it impossible to assume any name more safe than that of an idiot.

"My name is Art Maguire," said he, in reply to the gaoler. "I'm messenger to Square S——, the one he had was discharged on Friday last. I expect soon to be made groom, too."

"Come this way," said the gaoler, "and you shall have an answer."

He brought Phelim into the prison-yard, where he remained for about twenty minutes, labouring under impressions which he felt becoming gradually more unpleasant. His anxiety was not lessened on perceiving twenty or thirty culprits, under the management of the turnkeys, enter the yard, where they were drawn up in a line, like a file of soldiers.

"What's *your* name?" said one of the turnkeys.

"Art Maguire," replied Phelim.

"Stand here," said the other, shoving him amongst the prisoners. "Keep your head up, you villain, an' don't be ashamed to look your friends in the face. It won't be hard to identify you, at any rate, you scoundrel. A glimpse of that phiz, even by starlight, would do you, you dog. Jack, tell Mr. S. to bring in the gintlemen—they're all ready."

Phelim's dismay on finding himself under drill with such a villainous crew was indescribable. He attempted to parley with the turnkey, but was near feeling the weight of his heavy keys for daring to approach a man placed in authority.

While thus chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy, three gentlemen, accompanied by the gaoler, entered the yard, and walked backward and forward in front of the prisoners, whose faces and persons they examined with great care. For a considerable time they could not recognise any of them; but just as they were about to give up the scrutiny, one of the gentlemen approached Phelim, and looking narrowly into his countenance, exclaimed:

"Here, gaoler, this man I identify. I cannot be mistaken in his face; the rough visage and drooping eye of that fellow put all doubt as to his identity out of question. What's his name?"

"He gives his name, sir, as Arthur Maguire."

"Arthur what, sir?" said another of the turnkeys, looking earnestly at Phelim. "Why, sir, this is the fellow that swore the alibis for the Kellys—ay, an' for the Delanys, an' for the O'Briens. His name is Phelim O'Toole; an' a purty boy he is, by all report."

Phelim, though his heart sank within him, attempted to banter them out of their bad opinion of him; but there was something peculiarly dismal and melancholy in his mirth.

"Why, gintleman—ha, ha!—be gorra, I'd take it as a convanience—I mane as a favour—if you'd believe me that there's a small taste of mistake here. I was sent by Square S. wid a letter to Mr. S——t, an' he gave me fifty ordhers to bring him back an answer this day. As for Phelim O'Toole, if you mane the rascal that swears the alibis, faith, I can't deny but I'm as like him, the villain, as one egg is to another. Bad luck to his 'dhroop,' anyhow; little I thought that it would ever bring me into throuble—ha, ha, ha! Mr. S——t, what answer have you for the Square, sir? Bedad, I'm afeard I'll be late."

"That letter, Master Maguire, or Toole, or whatever your name is, authorizes me to detain you as a prisoner until I hear further from Mr. S."

"I identify him distinctly," said the gentleman once more. "I neither doubt nor waver on the subject; so you will do right to detain him. I shall lodge informations against him immediately."

"Sir," said Phelim to the gaolor, "the Square couldn't mane me at all, in regard that it was another person he gave the letter to, for to bring to you; the other person gave it to me. I can make my oath of that. Be gorra, you're playin' your thricks upon sthrangers now, I suppose."

"Why, you lying rascal," said the gaoler, "have you not a few minutes ago asserted to the contrary? Did you not tell me that your name was Arthur, or Art Maguire? That you are Mr. S.'s messenger, and expect to be made his groom. And now you deny all this."

"He's Phelim O'Toole," said the turnkey, "I'll swear to him; but if you wait for a minute I'll soon prove it."

He immediately retired to the cell of a convict whom he knew to be from the townland of Teernarogarah, and ordering its inmate to look through the bars of his window, which commanded the yard, he asked him if there was anyone among them whom he knew.

The fellow in a few minutes replied, "Whethen, divil a one, barrin' Bouncin' Phelim O'Toole."

The turnkey brought him down to the yard, where he immediately recognised Phelim as an old friend, shook hands with him, and addressed him by his name.

"Bad luck to you," said Phelim, in Irish, "is this a place to welcome your friends to?"

"There is some mystery here," said the gaoler. "I suppose the fact is that this fellow returned a wrong name to Mr. S., and that accounts for the name of Arthur Maguire being in the letter."

All Phelim's attempts to extricate himself were useless. He gave

them the proper version of the letter affair with Fool Art, but without making the slightest impression : the gaoler desired him to be locked up.

"Divil fire you all, you villains!" exclaimed Phelim, "is it goin' to put me in crib yees are for no rason in life? Doesn't the whole parish know that I was never off o' my bed for the last three months, wid a complaint I had, antil widin two or three days agone!"

"There are two excellent motives for putting you in crib," said the gaoler; "but if you can prove that you have been confined to your bed so long as you say, why it will be all the better for yourself. Go with the turnkey."

"No, tarenation to the fut I'll go," said Phelim, "till I'm carrid."

"Doesn't the gintleman identify you, you villain," replied one of the turnkeys; "an' isn't the Square's letther in your favour?"

"Villain is id!" exclaimed Phelim. "An' from a hangman's cousin, too, we're to bear this!—eh? Take that, anyhow, an' maybe you'll get more when you don't expect it. Whoo! Success, Phelim! There's blood in you still, abouchal!"

He accompanied the words by a spring of triumph from the ground, and surveyed the already senseless turnkey with exultation. In a moment, however, he was secured for the purpose of being put into strong irons.

"To the devil's warmin' pan wid ye all," he continued, "you may do your worst. I defy yees. Ha! be the heavens above me, *you'll* suffer for this, my fine gintleman. What can yees do but hang or thransport me, you villains? I tell yees, if a man's sowl had a crust of sin on it a foot thick, the best way to get it off ud be jist to shoot a dozen like you. Sin! Oh, the divil saize the sin at all in it. But wait! Did yees ever hear of a man they call Dan O'Connell? Be my sowl, he'll make yees rub your heels together, for keepin' an innocent boy in gaol, that there's no law or no warrant out for. This is the way we're thrated by thim that's ridin' rough shod over us. But have a taste o' patience, ye scoundrels! It won't last, I can tell yees. Our day will soon come, an' then I'd recommend yees to thravel for your health. Hell saize the day's pace or happiness ever will be seen in the country till laws, an' judges, an' juries, an' gaols, an' gaolers, an' turnkeys, an' hangmen is all swep out of it. Saize the day! An' along wid them goes the parsons, an' procthors, tithes an' taxes, all to the divil together. That day's not far off, ye d——d villains. An' now I tell yees, that if a hair o' my head's touched—ay, if I was hanged to-morrow—I'd lave *them* behind me that ud put a bullet, wid the help an' blessin' o' God, through anyone that'll injure me! So lay that to your conscience, an' do your best. Be the crass, O'Connell 'ill make you look nine ways at wanst for this! He's the boy can put the pin in your noses! He's the boy can make yees thrimble, one an' all o' yees—like a dog in a wet sack! An', wid the blessin' o' God, he'll help us to put our feet on your necks afore long!"

"That's a prudent speech," observed the gaoler; "it will serve you very much."

Phelim consigned him to a very warm settlement in reply.

"Bring the ruffian off," added the gaoler; "put him in solitary confinement."

"Put me wid Foodle Flattery," said Phelim; "you've got him here, an' I'll go nowhere else. Faith, you'll suffer for givin' me false imprisonment. Doesn't O'Connell's name make you shake? Put me wid Foodle Flattery, I say."

"Foodle Flattery! There is no such man here. Have you got such a person here?" inquired the gaoler of the turnkey.

"Not at present," said the turnkey; "but I know Foodle well. We've had him here twice. Come away, Phelim; follow me, you're goin' to be put where you'll have an opportunity of sayin' your prayers."

He then ushered Phelim to a cell, where the reader may easily imagine what he felt. His patriotism rose to a high pitch; he deplored the wrongs of his country bitterly, and was clearly convinced that until goals, judges, and assizes, together with a long train of similar grievances, were utterly abolished, Ireland could never be right, nor persecuted "boys" like himself at full liberty to burn or murder the enemies of their country with impunity. Notwithstanding these heroic sentiments, an indifferent round oath more than once escaped him against Ribbonism in whole and in part. He cursed the system, and the day and the hour on which he was inveigled into it. He cursed those who had initiated him; nor did his father and mother escape for their neglect of his habits, his morals, and his education. This occurred when he had time for reflection. Whilst thus dispensing his execrations, the gaoler and the three gentlemen, having been struck with his allusion to Foodle Flattery, and remembering that Foodle was of indifferent morals, came to the unanimous opinion that it would be a good plan to secure him; and by informing him that Phelim was in prison upon a capital charge, endeavour to work upon his fears, by representing his companion as disposed to turn approver. The state of the country, and Foodle's character, justified his apprehension on suspicion. He was accordingly taken, and when certified of Phelim's situation, acted precisely as had been expected. With very little hesitation he made a full disclosure of the names of several persons concerned in burnings, waylayings, and robbery of arms. The first two names on the list were those of Phelim and Appleton, with several besides, some of whom bore an excellent, and others an execrable, character in the country.

The next day Fool Art went to Larry's, where he understood that Phelim was on the missing list. This justified his suspicions of the Squire; but by no means lessened his bitterness against him for the prank he had intended to play upon him. With great simplicity he presented himself at the big house, and met its owner on the lawn, accompanied by two other gentlemen. The magistrate was somewhat surprised on seeing Art at large, when he imagined him to be under the gaoler's lock and key.

"Well, Art," said he, concealing his amazement," did you deliver my letter?"

"It went safe, your honour," replied Art.

"Did you yourself give it into his hands, as I ordered you?"

"Whoo! Be dodda, would your honour think Art ud tell a lie? Sure he read it. Aha!"

"An' what did he say, Art?"

"Whoo! Why, that he didn't know which of us had the least sense. You for sendin' a fool on a message, or me for deliverin' it."

"Was that all that happened?"

"No, sir. He said," added the fool, with bitter sarcasm, alluding to a duel in which the Squire's character had not come off with flying colours—"he said, sir, that whin you have another challenge to fight, you may get sick *agin* for thrеepence."

This having been the manner in which the Squire was said to have evaded the duel, it is unnecessary to say that Art's readiness to refresh his memory on the subject prevented him from being received at the big house in future.

Reader, remember that we only intended to give you a sketch of Phelim O'Toole's courtship; we will, however, go so far beyond our original plan as to apprise you of his fate.

When it became known in the parish that he was in gaol, under a charge of felony, Sally Flattery abandoned all hopes of securing him as a husband. The housekeeper felt suitable distress, and hoped, should the poor boy be acquitted, that "he might hould up his head wid any o' them." Phelim, through the agency of his father, succeeded in getting ten guineas from her, to pay the lawyers for defending him, not one penny of which he applied to the purpose for which he obtained it. The expenses of his defence were drawn from the Ribbon-boy fund, and the Irish reader cannot forget the elegant and pathetic appeal made by his counsel to the jury on his behalf, and the strength with which the fact of his being the whole support of a helpless father and mother was stated. The appeal, however, was ineffectual; worthy Phelim was convicted, and sentenced to transportation for life. When his old acquaintances heard the nature of his destiny, they remembered the two prophecies that had been so often uttered concerning him One of them was certainly fulfilled to the letter, we mean that in which it was stated "that the greatest swaggerer among the girls generally comes to the wall at last." The other, though not literally accomplished, was touched at least upon the spirit; transportation for life ranks next to hanging.

We cannot avoid mentioning a fact connected with Phelim which came to light while he remained in prison. By incessant trouble he was prevailed upon, or rather compelled, to attend the prison school, and on examining him touching his religious knowledge, it appeared that he was ignorant of the plainest truths of Christianity; that he knew not how or by whom the Christian religion had been promulgated; nor, indeed, any other moral truth connected with revelation.

Immediately after his transportation Larry took to drink, and his mother to begging, for she had no other means of living In this mode of life the husband was soon compelled to join her. They are

both mendicants, and Sheelah now appears sensible of the error in their manner of bringing Phelim up.

"Ah! Larry," she is sometimes heard to say, "I doubt that we wor wrong for flyin' in the face o' God, because he didn't give us childhre. An' when it plased him to grant us a son, we oughtn't to've spoiled him by over-indulgence, an' by lettin' him have his own head in everything, as we did. If we had sint him to school, an' larned him to work, an' corrected him when he desarved it, instead of laughin' at his lies, an' misbehaviour, and his oaths, as if they wor sport—ay, an' abusin' the nabours when they'd complain of him, or tell us what he was—ay! if we had, it's a credit an' a comfort he'd be to us now, an' not a shame an' a disgrace, an' an affliction. We made our own bed, Larry, an' now we must lie down an it. An' God help us! we made *his* bed too, poor boy, an' a bad one it is. God forgive us! but, anyhow, my heart's breakin', for bad as he was, sure we haven't him to look upon!"

"Thrue," replied Larry. "Still he was game an' cute to the last. Biddy Doran's ten guineas will sarve him *beyant*, poor fellow. But sure the 'boys' kep' their word to him, anyhow, in regard of shootin' Foodle Flattery. Myself was never betther plased in my life than to hear that he got the slugs into his heart, the villain!"

We have attempted to draw Phelim O'Toole as closely as possible to the character of that class whose ignorance, want of education, and absence of all moral principle constitute them the shame and reproach of the country. By such men the peace of Ireland is destroyed, illegal combinations formed, bloodshed and nightly outrages committed. There is nothing more certain than this plain truth, that if proper religious and moral knowledge were impressed upon the early principles of persons like Phelim, a conscience would be created capable of revolting from crime. Whatever the grievances of a people may be, whether real or imaginary, one thing is clear, that neither murder nor illegal violence of any description can be the proper mode of removing or redressing them. We have kept Phelim's Ribbonism in the background, because its details could excite only aversion, and preferred exhibiting his utter ignorance of morality upon a less offensive subject, in order that the reader might be enabled to infer, rather than to witness with his mind's eye, the deeper crimes of which he was capable.

THE END.

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